

A CAPTAIN, OF
RALEIGH'S

By
G.E. THEODORE ROBERTS

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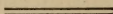
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G. E. THEODORE ROBERTS




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A CAPTAIN OF RALEIGH'S

A ROMANCE

G. E. THEODORE ROBERTS

Author of "A Captain of Virginia" "Cavado"

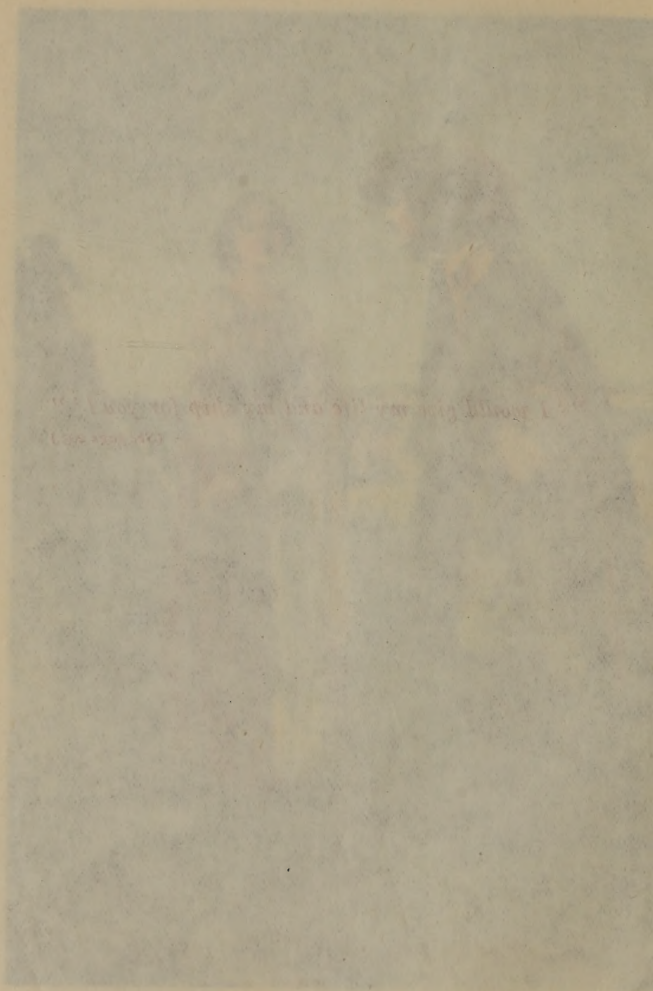
" "I would give my life and my ship for you ! " "

(See page 203.)

*With a frontispiece in full color
from a painting by*
JOHN GOSS



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By
G. E. THEODORE ROBERTS

*Author of "A Cavalier of Virginia," "Comrades
of the Trails," "Red Feathers," etc.*

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TO MY ISLAND FRIENDS
OF NEW FOUNDLAND IN THE NORTH
AND BARBADOS IN THE SOUTH, THIS
INACCURATE ROMANCE OF HISTORY
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

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A CAPTAIN OF RALEIGH'S

CHAPTER I

AT HOME WITH THE GOVERNOR

MASTER THOMAS DUWANEY, late an alderman of the city of Bristol and now governor, under the Company of Western Adventurers and Planters, of the plantation of Bristol's Hope, sat before his house and gazed eastward across the blue waters of Conception Bay. The winter was gone; and now May was well advanced and any day might lift the topsails of the Company's ship "Good Fortune" above the horizon. Since the middle of April many vessels had come to the bays of the Newfoundland — ships of England, France, Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands — honest ships and freebooters of the sea — galleys of twenty tons, and great

craft with forecastles and poops as high as houses, of three hundred and even four hundred tons. Around in St. John's (so Duwaney had heard from a Devon shipmaster), as many as a hundred and twenty sail, great and small, lay in the harbor on the same day.

In Conception Bay the fishing was already going briskly forward. At Guy's Colony two vessels, with supplies and new colonists, had already arrived. Captain Mason, the governor of Guy's Colony, had sent a boat-load of flour, dried fruits and wine around to Bristol's Hope, a gift to Governor Duwaney. Even now Duwaney had a mug of that wine at his elbow as he sat in the spring sunshine in front of his house and gazed seaward. Now he would lift the silver mug to his lips and now a great, brass telescope to his eye; but alert as was his outlook for the "Good Fortune," his slow mind was busy with a dozen other matters. He had worries great and small, public and private, to occupy him — the cares appertaining to the position of a forerunner of civilization and commerce, of

a magistrate with the powers of life and death in his hand, of the head of an infant colony threatened by buccaneers and lawless fishermen, and of the father of two motherless children — and, atop the responsibilities arising from these honorable situations in life, the great toe of his left foot was beginning to make itself a factor to be reckoned with in the ordering of day and day. Gout had marked him for its own long ago at municipal banquets, and had come to him, at last, in this unluxurious outpost of human activity. So, you see, this stout, middle-aged man, with his mug of wine, which he should not have tasted, and his telescope, had the cares of empire, of the law, of military leadership, of fatherhood and the trials of the flesh all with him at once. How he maintained his fat and (save on occasion) his good humor, under these trying conditions, baffles imagination.

A twinge in the offending toe shifted the channel of the governor's thoughts from the expected ship to the sufferings of three sick men of the colony. Another twinge brought

the threatening sea-rovers, and the Devon fishers who denied his authority, to his mind. Another stab of pain — and purely family matters occupied his attention. Never were the governor's mental activities so diversified as when the gout was prodding at his toe with its invisible, red-hot lancet. This family matter was not of a heartening nature. It was of his children, who were twins and now close upon twenty years of age. Their names were Thomas and Elizabeth. Of course they had been left behind in the big house in Bristol, in the care of a maiden aunt, a capable housekeeper and a trusty manservant. The thing that worried the governor was Thomas's weakness of spirit and wit. To a prosperous fellow like Duwaney, who had dreams of founding a gentle family on the rich harvests of his tradings, to have to acknowledge, — even if but to himself, — that his only son was lacking in both shrewdness and courage, was a dismal experience. But, having arrived at this decision in the autumn, he had sent word by the last ship eastward bound for Tom to come to him on

the “ Good Fortune,” in the spring. He meant to try to beat some manhood and common-sense into him, with the help of rough and stirring events, dangers and exposures, and young Donald MacAllister. Aye, if the lad would but take MacAllister for his model, there would be hope for him. In MacAllister, who was second in command at Bristol’s Hope, Duwaney saw what he had once hoped to find in his own son — courage, high spirits, energy and strength.

It appeared to him hard that these qualities should have been granted to the heir to a Scotch house of long-established distinction, and denied to his own son, who required them as the very foundation on which to rear aloft the House of Duwaney. In the matter of worldly gear the MacAllisters of Glenroe could not compare with ex-Alderman Duwaney, governor of Bristol’s Hope; but that the MacAllisters outdid him in possessions of another kind, the governor was the first to admit.

Duwaney was still thinking of his son when young MacAllister came to him from down

by the edge of the water, where he had been superintending the repairing of a boat that had been damaged by the ice earlier in the season. The young Scotchman was not fleshy, but of a strikingly robust appearance. He stood over six feet high in his heavy seaman's boots, was broad of shoulder, lean but broad of face and long of arm. His eyes were dark brown; and his hair, which he wore plainly tied and unpowdered, was also dark brown, but with a tint of richer color in it. His sun-tanned brow and cheeks were freckled, and wind and weather had roughened and reddened the skin on his long nose. But he had a pleasing look, in spite of these things — a pleasant smile, a light of more than ordinary intelligence and honesty in his eyes, strength in brow and bearing, and an air of courage and breeding over all. He wore serviceable clothes, a faded hat, and carried an axe in his right hand.

Duwaney was glad to have his lieutenant interrupt his dismal train of thought.

“ We have mended the broken boat,” said MacAllister. “ She is tight as a drum.”

“ I wish you could mend my poor foot, lad,” replied the governor.

Donald glanced at the silver mug at the other’s elbow, and smiled.

“ Tut! Tut! ” exclaimed Duwaney, interpreting the glance. “ A tun of that thin, mean wash would do a man no harm save for the distending of his waistcoat. Pooh! that will never heat the blood. Go get a measure of it for yourself, lad, and bring it out here in the sunshine.”

The young Scot stepped into the house, and soon returned with a stoup of the Portugal wine and a three-legged stool. He seated himself close to the governor.

“ The work goes well, sir,” he said. “ Five boats are at the fishing this very minute; Jordan is eased of his colic; Polly Dawes is recovered of her sore hand, and Martin, Smith and Paul March are in the woods cutting poles for the new stages. If the ‘ Good Fortune ’ but arrive, and with a fair passage, before the West-countrymen crowd into this bay, ’twill be a hopeful outlook for the plantation.”

The governor nodded. "Aye, if the ship would but hasten," he said. "I am eager to have the lad Tom ashore here, that we may clear his brain of some of the foolishness that swashes about in it like bilge-water in the well of a leaky ship."

"May I ask, sir, how your son exhibits this — this lack of solidity of mind of which you complain?" queried the Scot, politely.

The governor breathed heavily through his nose and scanned the east with his telescope before replying. "He writes verses! — verses to the moon — aye, and to ancient Romish goddesses!" he said, thickly.

"So!" exclaimed MacAllister. Then he smiled. "But 'tis not such a bad sign, after all," he said. "Think it over, sir, and the names of a number of the bravest and most distinguished gentlemen of our time, who indulge in the same harmless frivolity, will come to your mind. 'Tis considered a very polite accomplishment."

"A scurvy trade," said the ex-merchant, scornfully.

"Not at all, sir," replied MacAllister. "I

cannot hold with you there, sir. A most elegant pastime, I assure you, and played by men of the best breeding and most daring occupations in life. Who will turn you so neat a rhyme as a soldier or a sailor? What of our sweet Sidney and our brave Walter? Why, 'tis a game for kings, sir, like chess, military campaigning and stag-hunting."

But Duwaney shook his head. "You speak of Sir Walter Raleigh," he replied. "Then tell me, what has all this scribbling of rhymes done for that adventurous knight? He is a failure — a man who has let great opportunities slip through his fingers while he sat and scratched with his quill at harmonizing words. . *Love and dove!* Bah! He has been in prison, who had the world at his feet — and his *love and dove* to thank for it. And now how does he stand? He is still the plaything of chance. After all this glory and hardship a poor voyage will break him — a whisper overthrow him. I could name you a hundred quiet merchants who enjoy more stability of fortune than this great admiral, this glorious general. Even now he throws

his last main — rattles the ivory cup for the last time. 'Twas in the wind last summer how nearly the game draws to an end — how his tropical colonies are ashes, his mines of gold and of silver nought but air, and his ships abroad upon the sea, lawless and masterless."

MacAllister flushed darkly under his freckled skin. "Sir, I have sailed a voyage with that great knight," he said. "He has succeeded in a hundred ventures — in battles, in plantations, in voyages and affairs of state. Great he is, and has been, of heart and mind — and by what authority do you name him a failure? You would measure his accomplishments in life by the commercial fortunes of some petty traders. You might as wisely go measure the sea yonder with a linen-draper's yard-stick. What said my Lord Bacon of the proper management of colonial affairs? He said — "

"Tut! Tut!" cried Duwaney. "I'll hear no more, Master MacAllister! Mind you, sir, that I am the governor of this plantation. Though the Tree of Knowledge itself be pic-

tured on the coat-of-arms of your family, I'll not be browbeat by you. You bear yourself in a high and disrespectful manner towards me, Master MacAllister."

"If so, I beg your pardon, sir," said the Scot.

"Enough said," replied the governor.

"I spoke without diplomacy," admitted MacAllister. "That knight stands higher in my eyes than any living man."

"And right, too. A gentleman of great parts is Sir Walter Raleigh," said Duwaney.

For several minutes the two sat in silence, each busy with his own thoughts. The sun, high in the southeast, beat warmly down upon the half-dozen rough buildings of the colony. The boats were out on the blue waters of the bay, in plain sight, taking fat fish with hook and line as fast as the fishermen could haul in and lower away. From the woods of spruce and fir up the little river, came the faint, concise *thup-thup* of axe-blade upon wood. From the cluster of buildings near at hand arose clearer and sharper sounds of human activities — the clash and

ring of John Cope's sledge on white-hot iron, the lighter note of Bill Cope's hammer shaping spikes, springing away from the soft iron after every stroke to clatter twice upon the anvil. And there came a noise of tapping upon staves from Peter Cooper's little cooperage, and from one of the dwellings the harsh outcry of a metal spoon scraping around the edges of an iron pot.

"Homely and comfortable sounds," remarked Donald MacAllister.

"Prosperous sounds," responded the governor.

"I think," said Donald, "that the foundations of a colony, set in this bleak land, lie securer than those set in less rigorous climes. Here a man must work before he may eat; and so he is taught industry by that most insistent of teachers—his own belly."

"Aye, lad," replied Duwaney, "'tis a fair enough habitation, this, for him who has an ample wood-stack and a full storehouse, and a-plenty of work to occupy mind and body. Here are no wild and bloodthirsty

savages to fear, for the Beothics are a harmless people. The roaring fishers from Devon, and the black-hearted, grasping pirates, are the curse of the place; and they, Heaven knows, are not native evils. A deal of roguery is carried on in the name of trade — and safe enough, too, with all these wide, salt miles awelter between the rogues and English gallows. In truth, I know not which be the more dangerous to honest commerce and the plantations — the Devon men who come in the guise of law-abiding fishers, yet, in their greed of the fishing, hate to see any foundation of dwelling fixed upon the land, or the slashing, glass-chewing freebooters. The gentlemen of fortune are, in truth, the more honest in their wickednesses. For robbers they know themselves and for robbers they are known. When one espies a gentleman of that kidney he loads his culverins and falconets without compunction, and, perchance, obtains the advantage of the first shot; but we cannot fly so openly to arms against our own countrymen, who come with fish-lines in their left hands — though well we know that

their right hands are clasped upon the hafts of their knives and the butts of their pistols."

" 'Tis like reading a book, to hear you talk, sir," said Donald, with the frankness of the period and of his own nature. " Beyond a doubt, the West Country fishermen, and the powerful gentlemen behind them, are a great menace to the planting of these colonies. They have no aspirations above the filling of their pockets with the wealth of the fishing-grounds. They are lawless. I have heard that they make no more bones of spoiling a Frenchman of his catch or his salt than of buying a flask of wine. Might is right with those bully fellows, as sure as their ugly faces grow whiskers. I hope, sir, that you will use a strong hand to control their goings-on in the waters and harbors of this plantation."

" Aye, lad, you may trust me to show them who is master in Bristol's Hope, if they come here with any of their piratical tricks and their talk of harbor admirals. I'll show them that the days of harbor admirals and fishing

admirals are dead and gone, now that Thomas Duwaney is here, with the King's commission, and the Company's commission under the Royal Charter. They'll learn that they are not dealing with any weathercock dreamer like Gilbert."

MacAllister was pleased with the governor's spirit. He was of fighting stock himself, and liked to see instinct for combat warm in the stout ex-merchant. To keep him up to the proper pitch of combative ardor he had played upon his temper frequently, throughout the past winter, with talk of the insolence of pirates and Devon fishermen. And the talk was true. Of pirates one expects few virtues; but of one's fellow-countrymen it is surely not unreasonable to look for fair treatment, at least. But fair treatment was a thing that the struggling colonists of Newfoundland had long ceased to expect from the men who had no interests in the island save full cargoes of fish. The burly fellows from the West Country looked upon every settler in the harbors as a menace to their time-honored privileges of fish-

ing rights and harbor and shore rights. The fishers had strong court influence behind them. Even though the plantations were under charters directly or indirectly from the sovereign, the Devon skippers mishandled them without fear of the consequences.

CHAPTER II

ABOARD THE "GOOD FORTUNE"

WHILE Governor Duwaney and the men and women of his colony were recovering from the loneliness and confinement of the long winter far away beyond the western ocean, in the big house in Bristol a queer thing happened and shrewd plans were undone. Three hours before the "Good Fortune's" westward sailing, Elizabeth Duwaney went to her brother and whispered a startling suggestion into his ear. But Tom was not startled. Though poets are often shocked and disturbed by such matters as false rhymes and a halting rhythm, they as frequently remain cool and uncomprehending amid the tumult of mobs and the tottering of thrones. For a minute, Tom stared blankly at his sister and continued to mumble a line that was not yet quite to his fancy. Then he threw down his quill (for he was in the

heat of a fine lyrical composition), sprang to his feet and embraced her.

“ Bess, you are a jewel ! ” he cried. “ This is the best thing I’ve heard in a twelve month. Aye, and you’ll play the part a deal better than I ever could. ”

“ ’Twill suit every one but our dear father ; and even he, no doubt, will accept our way of looking at it after he recovers from the first stroke, ” replied the young lady.

Tom Duwaney rubbed his brow reflectively with the tips of his scholarly fingers. “ Perhaps not every one, ” said he. “ What about that old jackanapes Sir Stephen ? He’ll make a disturbance, I warrant you, next time he calls. But let him ramp, the old idiot ! ”

So it happened that Mistress Elizabeth Duwaney went aboard the Company’s ship “ Good Fortune, ” dressed in her brother’s best suit of velvet and lace, his finest hat and his longest cloak. And Master Tom returned to his lyrical task, at peace with the fantastic world inhabited by his poetic soul, and disturbed by not so much as a twinge of conscience at the dangerous and unusual course

which he had permitted his sister to undertake.

Elizabeth went straight to the little cabin that had been reserved for Master Tom, and stayed there, behind a closed door, for several hours. She felt no regret at turning her back upon the city of Bristol, for life with her brother and her aunt, the model house-keeper and the trusty man-servant, had proved a dull affair. Her only acquaintance among the gentlemen of the city and surrounding country was Sir Stephen Morris, a middle-aged baronet of ancient family. He himself seemed as ancient as his family, to Elizabeth. For a year past she had known that the baronet was anxious to marry her, and that he had her father's consent and encouragement. But she entertained finer ideas of life and love than her ambitious parent the ex-alderman — otherwise I'd not be writing this history.

Elizabeth's cabin was well-nigh filled with her boxes and bags, for she had brought complete and generous outfits of both feminine and masculine attire. She sat quietly on

one of the boxes, waiting for the ship to get well away from the harbor before running any risk of having her disguise pierced by the master until such time as their distance from port should weigh materially on the side of her arguments against turning back. She had noticed that the shipmaster was an old man — older, even, than Sir Stephen. But, young or old, mariners are men; and Elizabeth need have entertained no fear of being sent back to Bristol against her will. She sat on the box and smiled a little at the thought of how Sir Stephen would behave at the news of her departure; and she pictured her father's amazement, and rage, upon her arrival at Bristol's Hope — and even at that she smiled. She was a merry and high-spirited young woman, beyond a doubt. Also, she was quite as beautiful and attractive as any mortal has a right to be. Even to see her in that narrow, cluttered cabin, rigged out in Tom's clothes and cloaked and booted, was to understand poor Sir Stephen's feelings in the matter. Her eyes were blue — or gray? Nobody seemed to be quite sure

which, even at the time of looking. Her hair was of a shade believed to be gold by Sir Stephen and pronounced brown by her brother. Now she wore it clipped to less than one half of its usual length; and it lay, bright and waving, on her shoulders, in the style affected by the fashionable cavaliers of the time. I am at a loss for new words and terms with which to describe her face and figure. Anyway, descriptions of this kind are seldom successful. Her features were charming, and her complexion was satisfactory and neither very light nor very dark. She was neither fat nor lean; and though she was taller than many women, she was, undoubtedly, not so tall as many. I hope I have made myself clear.

At last Elizabeth left her seat on the box and opened the door of her cabin. She moved stumbingly in her brother's great jack-boots, despite the fact that she had stuffed them about the toes and ankles with silk handkerchiefs, to improve their fit. She had not discarded the long cloak and hat. Her room opened into the main cabin under

the high poop-deck. The place was dimly lighted by the square port in the stern; and by that dim light she saw the figure of a man stooped over the table in the centre of the cabin. At the sound of the door complaining on its hinges, the man glanced up from the chart unrolled on the table.

“ Good day to you, Master Duwaney,” he said.

“ And to you, sir,” replied Elizabeth, pleasantly.

The man uttered an exclamation of amazement at the silvery tones of Master Duwaney's voice. The girl understood, in a moment, what the matter was. A step each brought the two within clear view of each other. What the girl saw was a pale young man, thin as a wand, with pale hair and pale, spiritless eyes, a large, gentle mouth and a receding chin. His clothes were somewhat shabby but pretentious of cut and color, and at his side hung a light rapier. The expression of bewilderment on his gentle face was laughable. What the young man saw — and knew that he saw — was a charming and

undismayed young lady dressed up in what was evidently the pick of some wealthy gentleman's wardrobe.

"I — I beg your pardon," he stammered.

The girl laughed softly. "You need not do that," she said. "I am the offender. I must beg your pardon, and Master Spike's, too."

The young man continued to stare at her with an amiable but abashed regard, his thin cheeks aflame and his feet shuffling uneasily. The girl blushed for his confusion.

"No, no!" he cried. "I am sure that you have offended in nothing! Allow me, madame — sir — at least, madame — that is, which you will — to most respectfully introduce myself. I am Harold Coffin, an unnotable gentleman-adventurer and your humble servant, madame."

Elizabeth saw that the game of disguise was at an end — at least as far as this shabby young Master Coffin was concerned. She stepped forward and frankly extended her hand, showing none of those signs of silly confusion and coyness that were fashionable

among the young ladies of the day in all parts of England save the court in London. (Even pretended shyness was not noticeable in the court of King James the First.)

“ My name is Duwaney,” said the girl.
“ But it is Elizabeth in place of Thomas.”

Coffin took her hand very lightly upon the back of his own, as if she were a queen or a princess, bowed low and raised it to his lips.

“ I cannot find it in my heart to regret the change,” he said.

After that, they stood in silence for almost a minute, looking inquiringly at each other and smiling nervously.

“ What course do you advise me to follow, Master Coffin? ” asked the girl, at last.

“ None other than that which will carry you all the way to the Newfoundland in our company,” replied the young man, squaring his narrow shoulders and touching his hand to the guard of his rapier with an air of gallantry.

“ On that I am already determined, sir; but what do you advise in the matter of this

poor disguise? " returned Elizabeth. " Shall I try to maintain it, or shall I throw myself upon Master Spike's mercy and good nature and beg him not to put the ship about and pack me back to Bristol? "

" Will you tell me first, my dear lady, why you have undertaken this long and hazardous voyage? " queried Coffin.

" Simply for change and excitement," confessed Elizabeth. " My brother was willing that I should take his place, as he is very busy with writing verses; and I am not afraid of either the voyage or my dear father's anger, for I doubt not this stout ship will accomplish the one and Governor Duwaney's sense of humor will allay the other."

" In that case," replied Master Coffin, " if you will take the advice of a very poor gentleman — of one who has been cheated of his fair estate and cast abroad penniless — you will forsake the idea of this disguise, becoming as it is. I think that even from old Spike you could not hide the truth for long. That you are not — ah, your brother — my dear Mistress Elizabeth, is a fact impossible to

conceal unless you choose to wrap yourself in blankets from the crown of your borrowed hat to the soles of your borrowed jack-boots. Though I am no courtier, I knew the truth at the first note of your voice. A glance of your eye would tell all even to Spike, more accustomed though he be to the gleam of sun on water than to that finer illumination. So I advise you to immediately confess your play to the shipmaster. And you need entertain no fear of the "Good Fortune" being put about against your wishes, for even should old Spike prove such a monster as to contemplate returning you to Bristol, I have authority enough aboard this craft to stay his hand."

"You are very kind to me," murmured Elizabeth, allowing her eyes to dwell, for a moment, on Master Coffin's face. "I thank you with my whole heart," she continued, lowering her gaze from his eyes to his well-worn foot-gear. "I cannot understand why you champion me so readily, sir, for I am nought but a total stranger to you."

Harold Coffin bowed, and smiled with a

light in his eyes that was almost pathetic in its whimsical tenderness. "It is a gentleman's privilege to champion any woman who may stand in need of his services," he said. "In this case the privilege is an extraordinary pleasure." He paused for a moment; then, in a slightly higher tone, "Poor, unsuccessful and weak as I am," he continued, "I cannot pretend to remain untouched by such beauty and grace as yours. Do not think me impertinent, my dear lady, I beg of you, for I speak with all respect — aye, with homage! Miserable outcast that I am, robbed of my inheritance and abandoned by my class, the sight of you has gone to my sorry head like wine."

He stood staring at her for a moment, as if listening to the echo of his mad words — then flushed crimson and averted his face.

Elizabeth's tender heart was sharply touched. The gentle and pensive smile, the pale face, narrow shoulders and shabby attire, were enough to excite pity in even a less sympathetic breast than this honest young lady's.

“ You cannot, you must not think, for a moment, that I am offended with you, Master Coffin,” she said, tremulously. “ Your words show a noble nature, and I thank you from my heart for them. I am glad that you consider me — ah, not repulsive in appearance. But your unhappiness distresses me. Why has injustice been your portion? Have you no friends to stand with you against your oppressors? By your manner and your name I know you to come of a distinguished family in the West — in my own country. Please tell me your trouble, Master Coffin.”

“ It makes but a shabby tale, my dear lady, and I should think shame of myself if I were brought to inflicting it upon you, worthless, poor-spirited apology for a man that I am,” replied the youth, with open bitterness. “ But hark ye, I hear the shipmaster’s boots in the outer cabin.”

Both turned their faces toward the door, which opened at that moment and admitted the bulky person of Benjamin Spike, master mariner.

CHAPTER III

THE PASSENGER AND THE MILITARY COMMANDER

MASTER COFFIN stepped forward. "Benjamin, old shipmate," said he, "have you given good day to our passenger, the governor's child?"

Old Spike advanced, with a great hand extended.

"A good day to ye, master," he rumbled. "Ye've fetched a fair wind aboard with ye to blow us off the coast, an' I thank ye for it."

Elizabeth clapped her strong, slender hand into the great paw.

"If I bring you not good luck for the whole voyage, then you may toss me to the fishes, Master Spike," she said, merrily.

The old mariner gaped at her, holding tight to her hand and blinking his deep-set eyes as if he were looking into a furnace door.

“ I hope you are not angry,” said Elizabeth, withdrawing her hand. “ My brother could not come, so I came along in his stead.”

“ You will observe, Benjamin, that Master Duwaney is not exactly what we expected — in other words, that the young gentleman has turned out to be a young lady,” said Master Coffin, speaking very quickly and laying his hand on the old man’s arm. “ But you may take my word for it, old sea-dog, there’s neither treason nor mutiny in it — nothing, I do assure you, that even a bishop could take exception to. But Mistress Elizabeth will state the case herself, and so ably that you’ll wonder how it was that we ever expected any other sort of passenger.”

“ It be in no part o’ my orders, Master Coffin, to take for gospel every tale ye may see fit to tell me,” replied Benjamin Spike, with a rasp of displeasure in his voice. “ It be for me to sail this here ship, sir, an’ for you to fight her if need be — but never a word in the orders as to what yarns ye may choose to spin nor me to believe. What I

want to know, young lady — aye, an' you too, young gentleman — be, what's become o' my lawful passenger, the son o' Governor Duwaney o' Bristol's Hope Plantation in the Newfoundland? ”

“ This lady is the worthy governor's daughter, my good Benjamin,” said Coffin, “ and if you will but keep cool you'll hear everything to your entire satisfaction.”

“ Yes, I will explain everything to you, clear as day, if you will but listen to me, my dear Master Spike,” cried Elizabeth. “ You see, it is this way. My brother and I are twins; but we are not alike in our natures, for he cares nought for the sea and brave adventuring, but mightily for books of poetry and the penning of rhymes, while I dote upon seafaring and such things to distraction but take small heed to poetry unless it be in commemoration of brave deeds. So, dear Master Spike, we thought it would be wiser — and much more agreeable — for Tom to remain in Bristol, with his poetic frenzies, and for me to sail the voyage to the Newfoundland. To save argument, I came into the ship

quietly, disguised in these garments which belong to my brother, and have remained in my cabin until now."

"I take it, mistress, that ye be a friend o' Master Coffin," said Benjamin, with a shrewd glance from one to the other.

"How say you?" cried Coffin, wheeling upon the master.

"I ax ye a civil question, sir. Be this young lady a friend o' yours or be she not?" returned Spike, stolidly.

The thin, shabby youth clapped his hand to the iron hilt of his rapier. His colorless eyes flashed dangerously and his pale cheeks flamed. In the glow of his indignation he looked imposing.

"And who are you, fellow, to make so free with your questions?" he cried. "Know you nothing of discipline? I pray you to remember who is military commander of this ship."

"Keep your bilboe in its scabbard and your temper under your skin, master," warned the other, with a ponderous serenity of manner. "Right well do I remember the

military commander o' this ship, and as well do I remember her master. Fly no flights meward, young falcon, or perchance ye'll find the heron too heavy for ye."

"Hush, hush!" cried Elizabeth, grasping the old mariner by the wrist. "You must not speak so to Master Coffin — indeed you must not. My father would never allow it, I am sure. As for your question, good Master Spike — I, for one, can see no cause for anger in it. But I am not a man, ready to ruffle at every clink of the eye. Yes, Master Coffin and I are friends, though we met for the first time in this cabin, only a few minutes ago. His family stands high in my father's regard. I know that my father would have nothing to say against our friendship."

Coffin bowed elaborately to the girl. Spike scratched his whiskers, hemmed and hawed, and at last said, "If ye'll both swear to me that you, young lady, be none other than Master Duwaney's daughter, an' that nought of evil has befallen young Master Thomas, an' that this mad fancy be clear o' all manner

o' treason against King, Company an' ship, master, captain or crew, an' that ye'll both stand atween me an' the governor's wrath when we step ashore, then I'll make no more objection to havin' ye for my honored passenger to the Newfoundland."

"Honestly said, and like a true heart-of-oak," replied the girl. "And so I answer you as honestly, Master Spike. As I fear God and honor the King I do swear to you that I am the only daughter of Master Thomas Duwaney, one time an alderman of Bristol and now governor of Bristol's Hope; and I also swear that, to my best knowledge and belief, no harm has come to my brother and that he has remained at home of his own free will and pleasure. And I promise to stand between you and my father's fleeting anger, so that no harm may come to you in return for your courtesy."

"And I," said Master Coffin, "do assure you, on my honor as a gentleman and a soldier, that every word Mistress Elizabeth Duwaney has spoken is as true as the Book of Job."

“ Enough said,” replied Benjamin Spike. “ I trust I have not offended ye, mistress, an’ I crave your pardon for any seeming churlishness. A shipmaster must exercise every caution for the protection of his ship. An’ as for Master Coffin,” he added, turning upon that young gentleman with a slow smile, “ I humbly beg him to remember that his old shipmate Ben Spike holds him in all respect due to his blood an’ rank an’ soldierly renown an’ would liefer lose his left hand than come to point-an’-edge with him.”

Coffin clapped the old sea-dog on the shoulder. “ Aye, Benjamin, that you would,” said he. “ But your attitude of a moment since is already forgotten. I can well afford to forget it. So I’ll say nothing of what would most assuredly happen to you were we to come to cut-and-thrust. Enough, lad! I’ve soldiered in the Low Countries, and know a trick or two of which I’ll say nothing. Out with the best flask in our stores, Benjamin, and let us pledge hearts and hands to our fair and gracious passenger.”

“ Aye, ye be in the right o’ the mat-

ter again, cap'n," replied Spike, good-humoredly.

A flask of Spanish wine, red as a ruby, was produced from a secret corner of the locker under the stern window. The wine was poured, and the three ill-assorted shipmates drank to mutual good-fellowship and a fair voyage. The beautiful young woman, aglow with health and zest of life, and clothed so richly yet so grotesquely, just touched her lips to the rim of the glass. Unlike the beauties of Whitehall, she seldom drank even so mild a vintage as this red wine of Spain. Master Coffin gave his glassful a shorter shift; but he disposed of it with such an air that the lady felt that it was the toast rather than the flavor of the liquor that commended the draught to him. Benjamin Spike mumbled something, tipped his head back and the wine down, and smacked his lips with frank appreciation. Master Coffin winced at such an exhibition of low breeding in the presence of a lady.

"And now," said Spike, "since friendship an' fair play be drunk so sociable

atween the three o' us, an' I have spoke my mind like an honest shipmaster, I'll make so bold as to leave ye, mistress, an' step out upon the deck to have an eye to the workin' o' the ship."

And so he went, highly pleased with himself, and clapped his cap upon his head before he reached the door.

Later in the day the " Good Fortune " ran into dirty weather; and for three days after that neither the military commander nor the master saw anything of Mistress Elizabeth Duwaney. But on the morning of the fourth day she appeared again, pale but smiling and courageous, her eyes brighter than ever, and wearing her own clothes. She had been charming before, in spite of her unsuitable attire; but now her beauty and grace struck old Spike to a gaping dumbness and brought a flush of red to Master Coffin's cheeks. Elizabeth saw and instinctively understood the effect of her appearance on the two men; but she only smiled the more pleasantly (though she felt weak and dizzy, and far more like crying than smiling), and took her

seat at the cabin table with a matter-of-fact air.

“ I trust that the French cordial I sent you by my man James was to your taste, my dear lady,” said Coffin.

“ An’ the rum I sent ye by the cook’s boy, mistress,” said Spike, anxious not to be outdone by the gentleman. “ I hear that there be nought like it for the settling o’ a delicate stomach.”

Coffin glared at the shipmaster and trod heavily on his toe under cover of the table.

“ What now, master? ” cried Spike. “ Why do ye grind your heel into my toe as if it was the flank o’ a charger? ”

Coffin ignored him and turned to the lady in renewed confusion.

“ The cordial,” he said, “ was recommended to me by no less a personage than that great and unfortunate admiral, Sir Walter Raleigh — God rest his soul.”

By this time the lady was hungrily munching a ship’s biscuit.

“ They were both very good, I do not doubt,” she said. “ But I did not feel equal

to them; and what became of them I am at a loss to say. You must forgive me, shipmates. If your messengers had brought me measures running over with diamonds and rubies, instead of with cordial and rum, I should not have so much as lifted my head from the pillow to take note of them. But now the trouble is past. This biscuit is wonderfully hard but of excellent flavor."

"Ye be a brave lass," said the old shipmaster, with frank admiration in face and voice. Master Coffin said nothing, for he was so deeply moved by pity and other disturbing emotions that he could not lay his tongue to a word.

By this time, news of the lady's presence aboard was common throughout the ship. Every one was delighted with the knowledge that the "Good Fortune" carried a charming young lady, and the daughter of the governor of Bristol's Hope, for passenger, feeling that it would bring good luck to the ship. The story of her arrival in her brother's stead and also in his clothes quickly went the rounds; and she immediately became

a heroine to the rough and honest fellows. Nothing was so worshipped by the British seaman of those days as pluck. And that the lady was beautiful, too, appealed to every man-jack of them. Sea-chests were dipped into by tarry hands, and every odd and end of finery in possession of the crew was brought into every-day use. This brisking-up process made some of the men look more like pirates than honest Bristol mariners. Master Coffin donned a plum-colored doublet with rusty gold lace at collar and cuffs, and old Spike trimmed his tempest-tangled beard and curled his mustaches into his eyes after the manner then coming into vogue among military gentlemen who had seen service abroad.

For ten days from the lady's reappearance from her cabin the ship sailed westward undisturbed and the weather held fair. All went merrily, aloft and alow. Elizabeth spent most of her time on the high poop-deck, and in the bluster of salty winds and glinting sunshine soon regained her natural gaiety of temper. The color and roundness

came back to her cheeks — and the memory of those three painful days grew faint as a dream. She was in love with seafaring, and vowed that there was not a house ashore that she would not blithely forsake for the narrow deck of the “ Good Fortune.” Spike was tremendously flattered by all this; but Master Coffin, though rejoicing in her friendship and nursing a grand passion in his heart for her, felt that she was something too partial to sailing. So he would spend hours in telling her of the glorious opportunities for valor to be found in a soldier’s life. Sometimes they argued. Elizabeth maintained that a sailor’s life was fundamentally for good, though misfortune and chance might force him to bloodshed upon occasion; but that the career of a soldier depended for its very existence upon death and tyranny. She spoke of the discoveries of new lands, of new races and of new enterprises that had been accomplished in the past and were still being accomplished by seafarers. She named some great names in this connection. But though Master Coffin worshipped the lady

he could see very little merit in her argument; and he was far too honest to pretend a conversion of opinion that he did not feel. So he talked back, upholding the honor of the man of the sword desperately. Beaten at every point — for how could the poor fellow prove that it is a finer thing to kill men than to carry food and civilization across thousands of miles of trackless tide — he was once driven to such an extremity as to call the girl's attention to the fact that, as proved by his own presence aboard the "Good Fortune," sailors were sometimes glad to make use of military men. At that she had admitted, very gently, that she had nothing to say against soldiers individually — at least against none that she knew at all intimately — and that she, for one, felt very glad of Master Coffin's protecting presence aboard the "Good Fortune." As this was said without irony he had felt ashamed of his big talk.

In spite of these arguments, Mistress Duwaney's admiration for Master Coffin grew day by day. There was something heroic

even in his feeblest argument — a nobility of attitude, a fine loyalty to a wobbly god, a heart that saw valor, fortitude and victory and looked too high to notice the huddled shapes on the ground or to suspect the sordid motives behind the massing of the armies. She saw his bravery and his simplicity as plain as pictures in a book. She knew that he was one who would die for a friend or a cause without asking himself if the friend or the cause were worth the loss of his life. Reposed in so frail and pathetic a body as Master Coffin's, these heroic qualities seemed the more remarkable in her eyes. So the friendship of these two was quick and true, conceived in mutual admiration and respect and so safe from disaster from whim, vanity or misunderstanding.

It was not until the ship had been at sea a matter of fourteen days, however, that the young man told the girl the story of his misfortunes. But let it be said to his credit that he showed no eagerness to tell it and that his narrative was of a commendable brevity. Though an unadorned statement of facts it

lost nothing of its pathetic quality and affected Elizabeth keenly.

The second son of a gentleman of ancient holdings but reduced fortune, Harold Coffin had suffered the desolation of orphanage while still a child at school. After the death of his father and the settling of the estate, there was found to be nothing at home for Master Harold; so an uncle, a brother of his mother and a childless man, had taken charge of him. It was an open secret that the uncle's intentions toward the child were of the most generous nature — that he meant to adopt him as his son and heir as soon as a fuller knowledge of his character and nature should warrant his doing so; and that, in any case, a liberal education and a fair start in life were to be his portion. There was justice in this, for the uncle's only near relatives of his own blood were his dead sister's children. But this Uncle Hawley had a wife — and the wife, who had been married before, had a son named Peter Hard. And though this Peter Hard was well established in life with property of his own, both he and

his mother had their hearts and eyes covertly set on such of the Hawley possessions as were intended for Harold. This matter soon became apparent to the orphan, though it was kept hidden from Hawley, who was slow to see things that were not flaunted in his face and whose mind was of an unsuspecting cast. Harold was sent to a very good school near his new home; and things went well enough with him so long as his school-time lasted. On his seventeenth birthday Hawley asked him his choice of a career, saying that a young man should have a definite object in life no matter what his prospects. Harold Coffin chose the army without a moment's hesitation; and within the month he was gazetted to a regiment of the line that was stationed in London—a regiment of that new and swiftly growing regular or standing army that the people looked upon with distrust. Harold went to London, his heart beating high with hope—and there was Master Peter Hard, living the life of a fashionable dandy and eager to take Harold under his wing and show him the town. The

young ensign's military duties were not arduous and he had plenty of time to devote to pleasure and the company of Peter and his friends. And Peter Hard made himself very agreeable to the boy. His pockets were full of money. He was always delighted to lend to Harold, whose allowance from his uncle was no more than reasonable. With gold always at his command, Harold quite lost his head for a time. Along with Peter and a set of brisk companions he frequented the ordinaries and gaming-houses, dicing and playing with industry but ill fortune. The end came swiftly. Peter, the false friend, had done his work well. A letter from his uncle brought the house of cards tumbling about Harold's ears. He was disowned, cast out. He resigned his commission and became a soldier of misfortune. He fought in the Low Countries. For seven years he had been a homeless fellow, selling his sword and wandering, unbefriended.

CHAPTER IV

A DISTURBER OF THE SEA

HAVING explained his misfortunes to a sympathetic listener, Master Coffin felt greatly cheered. He confessed to the girl that, within the last week or two, life had turned a more hopeful face to him. "For I must be worth something," he said, "to have won your sweet friendship." He explained to her that this was his second voyage with Spike; but that he hoped to sail soon to the West Indies, in a privateer, and there take toll of the spoilers of those rich seas, at one and the same time dealing justice out to pirates and amassing a modest fortune for himself. And perhaps, some day, he would buy an estate in the island of Barbadoes and with plow and cane-knife increase the winnings of his sword.

One bright morning a sail appeared to windward of the "Good Fortune" and grew

swiftly from a flake of gray to a tower of white. Master Spike soon began to show signs of anxiety and turned his telescope upon it several times in every minute. At last he came to Master Coffin, who was on the poop with Mistress Duwaney, and begged for a private word with him in the cabin. The two went below, leaving the girl to watch the distant sail without suspicion.

“ It be no fish-ship,” said Spike, “ nor yet of the cut o’ any carrier I ever see in these waters. I take her to be a tall ship o’ five hundred tons or thereabouts, an’ English built.”

“ Name it, shipmate. What do you fear? ” said Coffin, calmly.

“ Something too big for us to handle—that be what I fear,” replied Spike.

“ An English pirate,” suggested the other.

“ We might stand a pirate off, for they be light-timbered an’ light-metalled in these parts; but this here looks to me as if she might prove to be the ship o’ one o’ Raleigh’s captains,” replied the mariner. “ They do say as how they hunt the seas like wolves,

since the admiral's misfortune, caring nought for any king or any law, an' ready to haul alongside o' any craft that floats, be it pirate, merchantman or ship-o'-war."

"Nor do I blame them," said Coffin. "They show a loyal and noble spirit in setting themselves against the king and the country who murdered their noble captain."

"This sounds like treason, master," whispered Spike, uneasily.

"Nay, you need have no fear of that," replied the other. "Raleigh was never captain of mine, and so I am what I am. But I tell you, Benjamin, that had I ever sailed under that great knight I should now be risking my neck as eagerly as any of those heroes in striking a blow or two in his memory. But my sentiments will not help us in this case, I fear. What do you suggest?"

"We must even bear ourselves as honest English seamen toward these freebooters, whoever they be," said the old man, vaguely.

"Bravely said, Benjamin; but what the devil does it mean?" returned Coffin. "Honest English seamen have so many

ways of bearing themselves that I must confess that I am still in doubt as to your intentions."

"This be no time for playin' with words an' twists o' speech," remarked Spike, severely. "We must make ready to give battle to the stranger should she force us to it. If she be the ship o' one o' they erring captains she may do us no harm beyond helping herself to wine and dainties from our lazaret — if to another o' these same gentry we may be swinging from our own yard-arm afore sundown, or walking the plank. I have heard that several o' these treasonous gentlemen are no nicer in their habits nor more merciful in their actions than the bloodiest Sally Rover afloat. So we must stand ready for her — ready of hand and wit — ready to fight to the death or make a gift of wines and spices, according to what the signs may be as to which way the cat be going to jump."

"Then I'll see to the clearing and manning of the great guns and the arming of the fellows," said Coffin. "But I tell you, lad,

that if the stranger is commanded by one of Raleigh's captains we'll come by no injury."

"Be not too sure o' that, master," replied the old seaman, smiling gloomily. "Many a ship has been sunk and many a throat has been slit by them that was gentle born."

"But we have a lady aboard," returned Coffin. "No officer of Sir Walter's, no matter how low he may have fallen since the knight's death, would do any injury to a lady for all the gold of the Indies."

"God grant you may be right," said the shipmaster.

Before seeing to the preparation of the cannon, falcons and falconets, or to the arming of the ship's company, Coffin went to where Elizabeth still stood on the poop gazing in the direction of the approaching vessel.

"What is it?" she asked. "She holds on a course that brings her steadily upon us."

Without preamble, he told her Spike's fears of the nature and intentions of the strange vessel. The color left her cheeks but

her eyes did not flinch. Then he reassured her with his own opinion of what they had to fear from the big ship. "At the very worst," he said, "we'll have to part with a little of our cabin-stores, and smile about it as if the presenting of a gift of wine and gimcracks was our own idea. I am ready to pledge my word that nothing more serious than this will come of the approaching encounter. Even I can see at a glance that she is not an ordinary pirate ship — so we may safely take her to be the vessel of one of these erring captains. With you aboard, madame, we have nothing to fear from a gentleman, no matter how desperate his condition."

"All men of gentle birth may not bear measuring by your standards, Master Coffin," said Elizabeth with a wan smile. Of course she did not feel at all like smiling; but she was determined that the cool and fragile young man at her side should not discover that she was afraid. This meeting with ships of doubtful intentions was an experience of seafaring that she had not counted upon. She had heard many tales of

pirates and their deeds, but they had all sounded like fiction to her. She had never suspected that a vessel that was in any way connected with so solid and well-regulated a man as her honored father could possibly be molested either on the high seas or in any harbor.

“Let us trust that the gentleman may prove to be as polite as you anticipate,” she said, quite steadily.

“Have no fear, my friend,” replied Coffin, looking at her for a moment with that in his eyes which he had hitherto managed to keep hidden. After a moment their glances wavered.

“I must go through the formality of preparing the ship for action,” continued the young man. “Whatever the intentions of that vessel, we must not be caught napping. If there should happen to be any gun-play — just by way of an exchange of compliments — I shall come to you and lead you to a safer place than this. But have no uneasiness. Should it come to a battle — though I can see no chance of it — I give you my

word of honor that I'll make a drifting wreck of that tall ship."

With that, Master Coffin passed forward to attend to his work as military commander of the "Good Fortune." He had meant every word of his assurances and boastings to the lady. Poor and frail though he was, his heart was bigger and braver than most men's. Also, he was young and in love. He felt that if circumstances called for a fight, in her protection he would be strong enough and skilful enough to administer a drubbing to the other ship, no matter what her weight of timber and metal, no matter how expert her gunners or how determined her commander.

The course of the "Good Fortune" was changed, and she ran fairly away from the craft that was so unmistakably interested in her. Strongly as she forged along, however, the larger and taller ship overhauled her steadily. All the great guns aboard the "Good Fortune" were loaded with round-shot. Cutlasses and pistols were unlocked from their racks and dealt out to the men.

The red ensign of England and the blue and white flag of the Company of Western Adventurers and Planters were run up to the "Good Fortune's" tops. In reply, a square of bright bunting flashed above the rounded sails of the pursuer.

"What make ye of that?" inquired Spike of the commander.

Coffin studied the bunting through the master's telescope.

"It is Raleigh's flag," he said. "We have nought to fear."

Even as he spoke, a white roll of mist hid the port bow of the stranger, a dull, thumping noise assailed his ears and a round-shot dropped into the sea about fifty yards astern of the "Good Fortune." In silence, the mist of smoke spread and dissolved in the wind and sunshine.

"There goes your fine gentleman ashowin' us his lamb-like manners," remarked Spike, unpleasantly. "I never see a bloodthirsty pirate pop out his compliments any quicker than that."

"I still maintain that we are in no danger

of anything worse than a brief delay in our journey," replied Master Coffin, nettled by both the unexpected round-shot and the old sea-dog's manner. "I still maintain that we have no villainy to fear if yonder sails one of the dead knight's captains, as we both believe. Rest assured, worthy Benjamin, that when he learns of the presence of a lady aboard this craft he'll let us go on our way without so much as a scratch. I speak with authority, Benjamin, knowing well the spirit of such gentlemen as Sir Walter Raleigh was in the habit of drawing to his service."

"Ye may be right, master. Aye, ye may be in the right o' the matter — but I'll be danged if I think so," said Spike, turning on his heel and hastening forward to speak to his mate.

Master Coffin hurried to Elizabeth and begged her to descend to the cabin for a little while.

"It is possible that they may fire a few more shots before we have an opportunity to make known our position," he explained.

“And as a chance shot might bring down some of our spars, you will be safer in the cabin than on deck.”

“I—I am not afraid,” said the girl, faintly.

“But you must consider our feelings,” said the young soldier, gently, at the same time offering her his arm and glancing swiftly into the troubled depths of her bright eyes. She took his arm and descended to the waist of the ship and entered the cabin without a word of protest.

The vessel that flew the flag of the dead knight continued to draw down upon the smaller ship. Soon she was well within gun-range; but fortunately for all concerned, she refrained from trying another shot at the pitching stern of the “Good Fortune.” It was evidently the intention of this erring captain to deal lightly with the merchantman and, at the same time, save his ship and his powder. Perhaps he wanted nothing more than a few flagons of spirits and a few bags of ship’s-bread. Even old Spike began to take heart at his forbearance.

Now the heads and shoulders of several men could be seen in the bows of the pursuing ship, like painted toys under the high-pitched bowsprit and square, full-bellied head-sails. She was an inspiring sight with her climbing canvas swaying against the blue and the froth of torn waves boiling white under her leaping stem. Indeed she had more the air of a king's ship than a free-booter of the sea. The crew of the "Good Fortune" gazed at her with open admiration.

CHAPTER V

MASTER COFFIN DISCOVERS AN OLD FRIEND

MASTER COFFIN put a speaking-trumpet to his lips and hailed the pursuing ship from the stern of the "Good Fortune." His voice carried clear above the slobbering of the seas against the speeding hulls and the working of yard and cordage. He named his ship, her home port and destination, himself as her commander and Spike as her master. The reply soon came to him across the narrow strip of lively water. "This ship is the "Jaguar," from the port she last left and bound for wherever she pleases. She is commanded by Captain John Percy."

Coffin's face brightened at that name. Again he raised the great trumpet to his lips. "Does Captain Percy remember his Christmas dinner of two years ago?" he cried.

"Yes," came the answer.

“ The roasted horse-flesh, the mouldy beans and the flask of stolen wine? ”

“ Yes, yes! ”

“ And the fight next morning between the big Dutchman and the thin Englishman? And the Dutchman's funeral? ”

“ He remembers it all.”

“ 'Tis the thin Englishman that speaks — Harold Coffin. Come aboard, Captain Percy, for old sake's sake. There will be no need of drinking stolen wine to-day.”

“ With pleasure, comrade. Come into the wind and I'll pull over to you.”

A few minutes later the two vessels were rocking idly on the brisk seas. A boat was lowered from the “ Jaguar ” and smartly pulled away for the “ Good Fortune.” Six seamen sat to the oars and three gentlemen, in long cloaks and wide hats, occupied the stern-sheets. Soon the boat was alongside and a Jacob's ladder lowered to her. One by one the gentlemen ascended the swaying ladder to the waist of the “ Good Fortune.” Captain Percy was the first to reach the deck. Master Coffin was on the spot to welcome

him, and the two embraced cordially like old messmates.

“How now, comrade!” exclaimed the visitor. “Little did I think to find the fire-eater of Bragg’s Brigade bouncing across the western ocean in the round belly of a merchantman.”

“And little did I expect to have a round-shot pitched after me by John Percy, captain of hussars,” replied Coffin.

The smile left Percy’s face. “Much wine has been drunk since then,” he said, gravely; “aye, and much blood spilt. One is fortunate to meet a friend at all, no matter under what unusual circumstances. Since our last meeting, comrade, I have lost the best friend mortal man ever had.”

At that moment the second of the visitors arrived over the side. Percy presented him to Coffin as Master Horace Down, another of Raleigh’s gentlemen. Next moment, the third visitor leapt to the deck. “Master de Verney — another of the masterless men,” said Captain Percy. Coffin welcomed them both with every indication of sincere cor-

diality and friendship. In fact he was overjoyed, what with the vanishing of threatened danger and the sight of three men of his own class and kind.

“ Let your fellows ascend and go forward. They shall be well cared for, I promise you,” he said to Captain Percy.

Percy leaned over the bulwarks and shouted the word down to the men in the pitching boat. Then Harold Coffin took him by the arm. “ Gentlemen,” said he, looking first at Percy and then at the others, “ we have a passenger aboard — Mistress Elizabeth Duwaney, the daughter of the governor of Bristol’s Hope plantation.”

“ Thunder and shot!” exclaimed de Verney, shaking the wrinkles out of his cloak of fine blue cloth.

“ By Heaven!” cried Master Down. “ I wear my oldest doublet!”

“ Now I understand why the fire-eater has undertaken so dull an expedition,” remarked Percy.

“ You are mistaken,” said Coffin, flushing. “ This is my second voyage as military com-

mander of the "Good Fortune." I had no knowledge, before embarking, that we were to carry a passenger on this trip."

"I understand, comrade. Had you possessed the knowledge you would have found another command, the lady being ill-favored."

"You are as sharp as ever, captain. One can hide nothing from you," returned Harold Coffin, smiling quietly.

"So this lady is old and ill-favored, is she?" remarked Master Down, disconsolately. "Then perhaps it had been better for all of us if we had sent a few more round-shot after the first."

"You are mistaken, I assure you," said Coffin, gazing fixedly at Master Down. "Whatever a lady's age or appearance, she must be treated with every mark of respect and consideration so long as she occupies my ship. Had other round-shots followed that first I should have believed that I had a common pirate to deal with—and so I should have dealt with him. Now I trust your understanding is clearer, sir."

“ And I hope so, too, Horace,” said Captain Percy, frowning at the offender. “ And let me warn you, lad, that I have seen this gentleman, our host, dispatch a gigantic Dutch bully before breakfast without so much as laying aside his cloak.”

Down and de Verney gazed at Master Coffin in open astonishment.

“ To the cabin, gentlemen,” cried the commander of the “ Good Fortune,” leading the way with his hat in his hand.

The cabin was ill-lit, having no skylight. The three visitors followed Coffin within and stood blinking. Elizabeth stood with her back to the window and her face in shadow. She guessed that these strangers were of the class of men — gentlemen-rovers of the sea — of which Harold had told her. So the sight of them relieved her fears vastly. This polite visit, hat in hand, could mean nothing but that all danger of hostilities was past.

“ Madame,” said Master Coffin, “ I beg to present to you the commander of the good ship ‘ Jaguar,’ Captain John Percy, and two

of his comrades. They have come aboard to pay their respects to the daughter of Governor Duwaney — and Captain Percy is kind enough to wish to renew old acquaintance-ship with me, for we once served together in the Low Countries.”

The gentlemen bowed profoundly and the lady curtsied.

“Come to the table, gentlemen. Madame, be seated, I pray,” continued Master Coffin. Then he shouted for his man James, who appeared at the door in a moment. “Bring candles, and glasses, and two flasks of the best wine of Oporto,” he ordered. “Also, tell Master Spike that we await his pleasure in the cabin.”

James saluted and hurried away. Turning to the company, Coffin saw that his guests had at last obtained a clear view of Mistress Duwaney’s face. They showed their surprise and admiration in attitude and expression. Percy stood with one foot advanced, motionless, his dark eyes fixed steadily upon the lady’s face. Master Down huddled his warm cloak tightly around him, to keep his

shabby doublet out of sight. De Verney was still bent forward in a second impressive salutation. Master Coffin smiled quietly. He had been quite right in his opinion of the spirit of Raleigh's gentlemen.

James entered with the candles and placed them on the table. With this additional illumination the girl increased in attractiveness — at least, every charm of her face was disclosed. Her eyes shone like stars in the soft yellow light. Coffin himself had never seen her look quite so beautiful. To the others, who perhaps had not seen an English woman for many months, she appeared a very miracle of loveliness. The sight of her recalled the best and happiest days of their lives — some wonderful days of childhood, perhaps, or of golden days of love that had been long ago, before the rough adventures and disillusion of the world had hardened them. A faint sigh escaped de Verney. At that, all three started and glanced about them, as if the spell were broken that had so suddenly come upon them.

“ It is kind of you to receive us, my dear

lady," said Percy, in a voice not entirely free from agitation.

"It is kind of you to go to all this trouble to call upon me," replied Elizabeth, smiling brightly.

A look of shame and confusion passed between Down and de Verney. Coffin saw it and understood. No wonder they felt ashamed of themselves. They had fired a shot at the vessel carrying Mistress Duwaney; and, but for the happy chance of Coffin making himself known to Percy, they might have engaged the merchantman in furious and bloody combat.

Spike entered the cabin and the visitors were named to him. James placed wine, cakes and glasses on the table. Stools were drawn up and everyone was seated. Coffin poured the wine, for James was not to be trusted in so delicate an undertaking.

"My masters," said Spike, "this be a happy ending to the morning's adventure. I feared something not so sociable. Well, here be luck to ye, gentlemen, an' may ye be as polite in your intentions towards all honest

merchantmen as ye seem to be towards the 'Good Fortune.' " So saying, he tossed the wine into his mouth and gulped it down.

Captain Percy frowned. " What feared you, my good master-shipman? " he inquired, looking coldly at the ancient mariner.

" Hoity-toity, my fine gentleman, I've lived too long on salt water to fear a puff o' wind," replied Spike. " If I told ye what I expected when I sighted your tops 'twould be no news to ye. One picks up a stick when he sees a strange dog. One lays his hand on his purse when he meets a masked man. One looks for something other than compliments when a strange vessel drops a round-shot under his stern."

" What do you mean? " asked Captain Percy. " Would you imply that you took my vessel for a pirate-ship? "

" That I did," said Spike, helping himself to wine. " I wasn't thinking ye'd fire a shot at us just by way o' lettin' us know ye was comin' aboard to drink a glass o' wine."

At this, Coffin laughed outright. " Don't

be so put-about by Master Spike's talk, Captain Percy," he said. "He has a habit of saying what is in his mind — and his own way of saying it."

"So I see," said Captain Percy. "And he takes me for a common pirate."

"Not for a common one, master," remarked Spike. "Common pirates don't attack ships o' war. An' that, I have heard, be what gentry o' your kidney have been known to do. Oh, ye be finer birds nor common sea-robbers — but none the safer to meet for all that, maybe."

"You are, evidently, ignorant of the difference between a pirate and a privateer," said Percy.

"Your ship is not a privateer," retorted Spike.

"Is she not? How so, my good fellow?"

"An English privateer does not molest English shipping."

"This argument is useless," interrupted Coffin. "Spike is in the right of it, Percy, and you may talk until this wine turns sour and you'll not put him in the wrong. Your

ship is neither an honest merchantman nor yet a privateer. But, to give the devil his due, you have a sufficient excuse for your new and hazardous way of life. Let us change the subject."

"I must seem persistent, even ill-mannered, comrade," replied Percy; "but change the subject of discussion I will not until I have made my true position clear to Mistress Duwaney."

He looked across the table straight into Master Coffin's eyes, and Coffin returned him glance for glance. Captain Percy's face was thin and dark, pensive and possessed of extraordinary charm. The source of this charm was the strange part of it, for his fine nose had been broken and showed an unnatural bump in the bridge, and his mouth, of generous width, had the air of being slightly one-sided. A few people thought him ugly, many thought him exceedingly fine-looking, and all who knew him acknowledged the rare charm of his appearance and manner.

"As the lady wishes," said Coffin, composedly.

“Certainly,” replied the captain of the “Jaguar,” bowing slightly.

“I am anxious to know Captain Percy’s true position,” said Elizabeth, faintly.

“Thank you, madame,” said Percy. “I feel that you and Master Coffin will see my argument immediately—but this good mariner has a head as solid as the oaken frame of his ship.”

“Never mind my head nor my ship, master, but show us your position,” said Spike, pulling at his trimmed beard.

“I have been a soldier and an honorable fighter all my life,” began Percy, “and have fought in many lands and under many flags. Master Coffin can vouch for my reputation as a gentleman and an honest officer in the Low Countries, for there we were comrades in arms. For the past two years I have followed my military career on shipboard. At first, as commander of the ‘Jaguar,’ I served the King and that noble knight, Sir Walter Raleigh. I carried colonists to the knight’s plantations, explored the hearts of tropical jungles by his orders, and fought Spaniards

and pirates on the sea. When the King caused my beloved captain to be put to an ignoble death, by such base and cowardly means, to curry favor with Spain, I foreswore all alliance to that treacherous and merciless monarch and vowed that the world should feel something of the sting of my grief. The gentlemen who were with me and every man of my crew were of my way of thinking. Other commanders of the dead knight's ships committed themselves to the same course of action. They, too, have made their anger felt, since then. We have showed the weak-minded James that Raleigh still lives — but now to destroy instead of to build — in the hearts of his captains. But I am not a pirate. Spain may call me so, but Spain alone. I have fought and looted two Spanish ships; but they were as large as the 'Jaguar' and as heavily armed. I did not put any of their men to death after the victories, and I let them sail away — and they sailed all the better for their empty holds. I have engaged, despoiled and scuttled a notorious pirate. I have engaged openly with a king's ship; but

I let it crawl away to nurse its wounds. From any merchant-ship other than the Spanish vessels of which I have spoken, I have never taken more than a few bags of provisions. I have destroyed no voyage nor shed the blood of any honest sailor-man. Twice have I come between a pirate-ship and her intended prey. This is the full tale of my activities as an erring captain — and I ask you whether or not I deserve to be named for a desperado of the sea? ”

“ You have behaved very nobly, sir,” said Elizabeth, shyly.

“ You have followed a course worthy of your name and your lofty character, comrade,” said Coffin, flushing with generous emotions.

“ If what the gentleman says be true, then he be the most remarkable pirate I ever heard tell of,” said Spike.

CHAPTER VI

THE GOVERNOR'S BAD DAY

“ You do not mean to be insulting, ship-master? ” queried Percy, looking at Spike with his mouth a trifle more to one side than ever.

“ Insulting? Nought could be further from my intention, sir,” replied the old navigator, honestly. Elizabeth laughed — and in a moment Captain Percy and the others of the little company joined in the mirth. And so, for half an hour, good-fellowship and perfect understanding prevailed in the cabin of the “ Good Fortune.”

When the visitors were ready to return to their own ship, Coffin drew the commander of the “ Jaguar ” aside. “ Do you lack anything, comrade? ” he asked. “ How are you supplied with provisions? ”

Captain Percy blushed and laughed uneasily. “ We lack nothing; but it is like your good heart to ask it,” he said. “ We lack

nothing to eat and nothing to drink — but only our great commander. That loss my heart cannot forget. But you have treated me well, comrade; and I hope you have forgiven me that round-shot, which was intended as nothing more than a request to heave to, so that I might come aboard and learn your business. And I hope that Mistress Duwaney does not hold me in distrust.”

“ The shot is forgiven, comrade — and I feel sure that our passenger knows you for the brave and honorable gentleman that you are,” replied Harold Coffin, generously.

When the gentlemen of the “ Jaguar ” were over the side and in the stern-sheets of their small boat and Elizabeth, Coffin and Spike were gazing down at them, Percy stood up and removed his hat. “ I shall give myself the pleasure of keeping you in sight until you reach your harbor, for these are dangerous waters,” he said. Then, at a gesture of his hand, his stout fellows bent their backs to the oars and the little boat drew away from the “ Good Fortune.”

Three days later, the lookout sighted the

grim and desolate coast of the Newfoundland. Spike knew his exact position at a glance and headed his ship a few points northerly. He had made his landfall near the hidden entrance to the harbor of St. John's. The great bay of Conception lay to the northward. Though the distant coast was bleak and forbidding of aspect, the general outlook from the sea-weary ship was enlivening. The sun shone from a clear sky and there was no sign of fog in any direction. The small seas flashed in the spring radiance and a great iceberg, drifting majestically southward, seemed tipped with white and blue flame at every point and angle. The rocky coast of the island changed in hue from smoky gray to purple and warm brown. Several little fishing-boats, with dingy sails, moved over the green waters. Astern, the white tower of the guardian "Jaguar's" canvas gleamed like pearl in the sunlight.

Elizabeth and Harold went forward and ascended to the high fore-castle-deck. Elizabeth found a comfortable seat on a great coil

of rope. The young man stood close beside her, leaning his shoulders against one of the taut stays that supported the high-pitched jib-boom. He was doing his best to conceal from his companion a terrible depression of spirits from which he was suffering. The voyage was almost over. The separation was soon to take place — the separation that was for a life-time. And yet a life-time, so far as he was concerned, might prove to be a very brief period of time. If the fog and cold of the north did not kill him before many years had passed, it was altogether likely that bullet or knife in the West Indies would accomplish the inconsiderable business. These desperate reflections on the part of the frail young gentleman were entirely due to the fact that he was in love with Elizabeth Duwaney. Fully aware of his shortcomings — of his poverty, grotesque figure, undistinguished face and ill-health — he realized that though the lady might feel friendship and pity for him she could never love him as a man who loves has a right to be loved in return. Well he knew that the qualities

that enabled him to take his place in rough camps and aboard rough ships were not such as to put him on an equal footing with so good and beautiful a young woman as this daughter of the ex-alderman of Bristol. Oh, it was no thought of social inequality that disturbed. Socially, things were quite the other way — for, despite his poverty, he was what her worthy father was not — a gentleman. But no foolish thought of this kind entered his head for a moment. It was the sense and knowledge of personal inequality that occupied his mind and depressed him unspeakably. He saw his duty plain. He must hide his heart and show only a reasonable friendship. In a day or two they would part — and then he must forget, in hardship and adventure, that they had ever met.

“ Now that the voyage draws to its end I begin to feel some uneasiness on the score of my reception,” confessed Mistress Duwaney.

Thus recalled from the bitter shades of his reflections, Master Coffin looked down at her

upturned face with his insignificant features twisted into a tragic smile.

“I cannot believe,” said he, “that you can possibly have any grounds for uneasiness. I am sure that your father will be delighted to see you after the long, dull winter which he has endured.”

“I pray you may be right,” returned the girl, in anxiety not entirely pretended. “That is exactly how I felt when I set out on this daring enterprise; but now, when Bristol and Tom are so far astern and the plantation and my father so close in front, my courage and assurance waver a little. It is an excellent joke, of course; but for all that, here am I where I am not wanted, and there is Tom still snug at home — in exactly the place which my father intended to draw him from. We are accustomed to the joke — but I fear it will be a notable surprise to my dear father.”

“If I were he I should consider it a delightful surprise,” returned the infatuated youth.

“If you were my father,” laughed the girl.

Then Master Coffin remembered himself and gazed straight ahead of him at the flashing sea. "I do not think his anger will last more than a few minutes," he said, with a huskiness in his voice which he could not overcome. Elizabeth looked up at him, quickly and with anxious inquiry in her eyes. Without seeing them, Harold was aware of both the movement and the glance. He turned, avoiding her eyes, and looked directly aft.

"What is it?" asked the girl. "Are you in pain?" The consciousness of his narrow chest and pale cheeks was always with her and, though he never mentioned his health, she often feared that he was suffering. Startled by the strange tone of his voice, this question had slipped, unweighed, from her lips.

He looked down at her — and that he was in pain she could not doubt. Their eyes met for only a second — but in that second she understood. A brief but potent silence followed in which they stared separate ways but saw nothing.

“Percy continues to keep us well in sight,” remarked the young man, in a voice that, for all its studied calm, could not deceive the girl’s anxious and sensitive ear.

“Such devotion is truly remarkable,” she replied, giving no thought to her words. “A comrade like that is worth much hardship in the winning.”

By now Harold was outwardly himself again. He laughed shortly but without bitterness. “Do you not think, my dear lady, that it is for your safety rather than for that of his old comrade-in-arms that he has convoyed us so far?”

“It cannot be!” exclaimed Elizabeth, honestly surprised and genuinely confused. “It cannot be so, Master Coffin. Surely his friend’s safety is more to him than that of a strange young woman? Why, he knows nothing of me but my name — and I think that would make no great impression upon him.”

“He has seen you,” said Harold, with unnatural levity.

The girl, blushing, smiled thoughtfully to

herself. And thus, all unheeding, did Master Coffin sow the seed that was to blossom in due season.

And now to return to the plantation of Bristol's Hope. Master Duwaney, awaking from a nap before the fire of birch logs on his wide hearth, took his telescope from its slings against the wall and hobbled out to have another look for the topsails of the "Good Fortune." The time was mid-afternoon. He seated himself on the bench beside the door and began to polish the lenses of the telescope with a silk handkerchief. Not once did he raise his head for an inspection of the bay with the naked eye. It was his intention to look through his telescope — therefore he would not look at all until the glass was ready. Such was the governor of Bristol's Hope. He was still polishing vigorously when three men came up from the shingle, halted in front of the governor and knuckled their caps.

"Here be the 'Good Fortune,' yer worship," said the senior of the three.

“How say you? Where away?” cried Duwaney, letting the handkerchief flutter to the ground and lifting the telescope to his eye. But he did not see the ship, for in his excitement he had pointed the glass fair at old Bill Wing’s expansive chest.

“She be that handy, sir,” said Bill, “that ye’ll glimpse her as well with yer eye as through that there fine horoscope.”

“How so, fellow!” cried the governor; but in spite of his indignation he lowered the glass and looked down the bay — and there, sure enough, was the “Good Fortune,” her anchors already let go and her sails swiftly furling.

“Bless my soul!” exclaimed the governor. “That’s just like that old fool of a shipmaster! Here I’ve been watching for him for the past two weeks, night and day, so to speak, and as soon as I take a wink of sleep, in he crawls. Where is Master Mac-Allister?”

“He was off to the woods, yer worship, when we left for the fishin’,” replied Bill Wing.

“ Then pull me out to the ship, lads,” said the governor.

Now it happened that Wing and his two companions had come straight in from the fishing to warn the governor of the approach of the “ Good Fortune,” and so their boat was half-full of fish. The ship had sailed so close on their heels that they had not paused to unload on reaching the land-wash. Their haste may be explained by the fact that by an unwritten law of the plantation the first man to give word of the arrival of a ship in the bay was entitled to a gallon of home-brewed ale. Even a gallon of ale is worth dividing by three.

“ How is this? ” cried the governor, upon reaching the skiff. “ Do you think that I, the representative of His Majesty’s authority in these parts, can go out to receive the Company’s ship, and in my official capacity at that, perched atop a heap of slimy cod-fish? ”

“ ’Twon’t take us two shakes o’ a ram’s tail to heave ’em out, yer worship, an’ put all ship-shape,” said Bill Wing.

“ I’ll thank you not to make suggestions to me,” snapped the governor. “ You forget yourself, William. As for this fellow Spike, I’ll let him see that though he may dawdle the precious weeks away in crossing the ocean I am ready for him on the minute. So shove off, my good fellows, that I may be alongside before the shipmaster has time to lower a boat.”

That the “ Good Fortune ” had slipped into port while he indulged in his afternoon nap rankled in the worthy governor’s mind, for it pleased him to have people think that the responsibilities of his position kept him always alert and awake. And now, to add pepper to his temper, he was forced to take his seat on a folded sail atop a pile of slimy fish. Also, his offending toe began to throb.

Governor Duwaney was in a piping hot humor when the skiff reached the anchored ship. He found the ladder already lowered for him and Spike and Coffin gazing over the side, hats in hand, and arrayed in their best clothes. In ascending the ladder he suffered agony in his toe and scraped his knuckles.

The commander and the master received him ceremoniously, with the whole ship's company drawn up at attention in regular man-o'-war style. This show of respect would have chased away his ill-humor on ordinary occasions; but this was not an ordinary occasion.

"You are late," he cried, glaring from the uneasy master to the yet more uneasy commander.

"The ways o' the wind an' the sea be in the hand o' the Lord," replied Spike, with an effort to maintain his usual stolidity of manner.

Duwaney gave no heed to the master's words. "Where is my son?" he cried. "Why is he not here to receive me? What is the world coming to when a son dare treat his father with such lack of respect?"

Coffin and Spike glanced anxiously at each other, and even the hardy mariners, standing arow in honor of the governor, felt a chill of apprehension pass through their hearts of oak.

"Where is he, I say!" cried the governor,

adding fuel to his internal fires by stamping his gouty foot upon the unyielding deck.

“Sir, your son,” began Coffin — and stopped there for lack of anything more to say.

“Out with it! Out with it, Master Coffin! What have you to say of my son? The truth, sir, I command you! Is he alive or is he dead? Is he aboard this ship, or is he not? Has the sea got him, or have pirates carried him away? Out with it! Out with it!”

The old man was in a terrible state, for now paternal anxiety was mixed with his anger. His face was red as a squid. He stepped close to the dismayed Master Coffin and clutched the front of his doublet with both hands.

“What have you done with my son? Tell me, or I’ll shake it out of you,” he shouted.

CHAPTER VII

MORE OF THE GOVERNOR'S BAD DAY

“ ’PON my word, sir, you forget yourself. Unhand me. Your son? I have never set eyes on the worthy youth,” returned Coffin, his anger beginning to overwhelm his embarrassment.

Duwaney shook him violently. “ How say you? Never set eyes on him? Then you have not brought him? ”

“ Away with you! Unhold me, lest I do you an injury. D’you think you’re back in your warehouse, handling a sack of corn? ”

At this the furious magistrate looked as if he were about to have a fit. “ You insolent rascal! You penniless whipper-snapper! ” he bellowed, shaking Master Coffin backward and forward by the front of his doublet.

“ You go too far,” cried Spike. “ Have a care! ” He saw a light in the commander’s pale eyes that meant danger. Without apol-

ogy he grabbed Duwaney by the shoulders and jerked him away from the other. At that moment Elizabeth appeared from the cabin, where she had been waiting in trepidation for her father to find her. His furious cries, however, had drawn her from her retreat. She ran to him and clutched his hands. For a little while he gaped at her with protruding eyes and open mouth. But this crowning shock was too much for him and he suddenly fell flat on the deck. The girl sank to her knees on one side of him and Harold Coffin on the other.

“ It is nought but a fit,” babbled the young man, ashamed of his part in exciting the governor. “ He'll be right as a trivet in a few minutes. He has too much blood — and it has all flown to his head. He was in a flurry when he came aboard and would listen to nothing.”

But the girl was weeping bitterly and heard nothing of his words. “ Oh, what have I done? I have killed him with my wicked prank,” she cried, brokenly.

Now Master James, the commander's body

servant, appeared upon the scene, pushing his way through the ring of mariners that surrounded the prostrate and unconscious governor. In his hands he carried a metal bowl, some strips of linen and a small box.

“Allow me to attend to him, mistress,” he said. “During my years of soldiering in my master’s service I have learned a deal of surgery. His worship has too much blood and it be too hot. Let me get at him and I’ll have him cool as a candle and lively as a cricket in ten mortal minutes.”

“James speaks truly. He is skilled with the lancet,” whispered Harold, reaching across the bulky governor and taking one of the girl’s hands in both of his.

And so Master James was allowed to practise his military surgery on the governor of Bristol’s Hope. That he made the most of his opportunity you may well believe, and was not satisfied until he had drawn such a quantity of blood from the over-charged veins as would have left an ordinary man dry as a bone. This simple and heroic treatment did the trick, however. Within ten minutes

of the moment of his fall the governor sighed and opened his eyes. Truly he was cool as a candle, though not quite as lively as a cricket. His blind rage of a few minutes before had vanished entirely as if it had been a poison in the blood that James had so deftly released and caught in his metal dish.

"I fear I have had a seizure — the result of worry and overwork," remarked the governor in a small, mild voice.

"That is indeed the case, sir," said Harold.

"And I was unduly wrought up, I believe, concerning the whereabouts of my son," continued Duwaney. "Even now I am not quite clear on this point — owing, no doubt, to my disturbed state of mind at the time of making inquiry."

"Allow me to feel of your pulse, your worship," said James.

This favor was allowed without protest from the great man.

"Steady as marching and strong as a horse," announced James.

"I seem to have a misty sort of recollec-

tion — or maybe 'twas a dream — of seeing the face of my daughter for a moment, before my emotions overwhelmed me," said the governor.

"Your daughter is here, sir. She could not remain away from you a moment longer and dared to risk your displeasure for very love," said Master Coffin, carefully avoiding the other's glance.

"Where is she?" inquired the patient in a dove-like voice.

He had been carried from the deck to the cabin and now lay on the wide locker under the stern window. Elizabeth, who had been standing behind his head and out of his range of vision, now moved forward and knelt beside him. "Here I am, dear father," she murmured.

He laid his hand very gently on her bowed head. "You have played me many pranks, Sweetheart; but this last certainly beats the devil for madness and impudence," he said, mildly. "If this obliging surgeon had not deprived me of at least a bucketful of hot blood I'd be sorely tempted to give you a

whipping, my dear, just by way of discipline. But as it is, it is. I hope you are in good health, my dear? ”

“ Yes, sir, in far better health than I deserve,” replied the girl in trembling accents, raising her head and gazing through a mist of contrite tears at her father's face.

“ And Tom? Did you leave him in the enjoyment of his usual good health and befuddled state of mind? ” inquired the governor.

“ Yes, sir. He was still busily engaged in writing poetry,” replied the girl. “ But this is not his fault,” she added, after a brief pause. “ It was my idea entirely — this of making the voyage in his stead. But for me he'd be here now, according to your orders.”

“ I could forgive him disobedience more easily than this tomfool lack of spirit and will power,” said the governor. “ He could be taught to obey. A rebellious spirit could be curbed and guided. But if the Almighty saw fit to create him without a backbone I fear that it is beyond my power to make good the deficiency.”

Here Master James (at a nod from Harold) again possessed himself of the patient's wrist. "You must calm yourself, your worship," he cautioned, with a very solemn air. "If you allow your mind to dwell upon unpleasant subjects your blood will again heat and rise to your head, in which case, your worship, I shall feel it my duty to draw off another quart or two of the poisonous liquid."

"What is this?" returned Duwaney, raising his head from the pillow. "How dare you name my blood for poisonous liquid? A pretty way to talk of the governor of Bristol's Hope, I must say, and fair in his face, at that."

"I spoke of your blood, your worship, purely from a surgical point of view," answered James, hastily.

"Then speak no more of it," snapped the governor. "And mark ye," he added, "that if I see you draw that little knife within a league of my person I'll have you hung from the flagstaff in front of my house."

“ His worship needs rest and quiet,” whispered the crestfallen James to his master. Then he went swiftly and quietly from the cabin.

Duwaney at last consented, under the combined pleadings of his daughter and Master Coffin, to remain a few hours longer in the cabin of the “ Good Fortune.” To tell the truth, he was in no great hurry to move — though he pretended to be vastly anxious concerning the safety of the colony during his absence. One would think that he was afraid that it would be carried away, rocks, roofs and people, by some enemy of the Company. I must confess that the worthy governor was something of a humbug. Plenty of good men are humbugs in harmless ways. It is usually due to a mild vanity of one kind or another. Duwaney was vain of a reputation which he believed himself to possess for hard work and unflagging vigilance as a colonizer. That he really did not possess such a reputation is neither here nor there.

Master Donald MacAllister boarded the

“ Good Fortune ” within an hour of the governor’s recovery from the seizure and the remedy. Bill Wing, who had returned to the shore without waiting for orders to that effect, had told him a mad and wonderful story. According to Bill, the governor had accused Master Coffin of having murdered his son and had attacked Master Coffin in a violent manner. Then, of a sudden, a young lady had dashed from some hiding-place and knocked the governor flat on the deck. At this point old Bill Wing and young Bill Wing and Ken Wood had pulled swiftly away from the ship, not wanting to become involved in affairs of state.

MacAllister sprang to the deck of the “ Good Fortune ” with his naked sword in his hand and five armed men at his heels, afire with anxiety and fury, and fearful of he knew not what horrid act of treason. Three men of the “ Good Fortune’s ” crew who happened to be loitering about the main deck stood their ground for half a second, gaping in astonishment and convinced that they had anchored off a nest of pirates, and

then turned and fled to the security of the forecastle. Word flew through the ship that six pirates — or madmen — had come aboard. MacAllister, shouting the governor's name, made straight for the after-cabin with his five supporters close behind him. His hand was extended for assault upon the door when it was opened for him by Elizabeth Duwaney. He halted so sharply that his men collided against him. He snatched his hat from his head and tried to get his sword out of sight behind his back.

“ Who are you? Why do you shout my father's name? ” faltered the girl, her nerves, already overwrought, grievously shaken by the warlike appearance of the visitors.

For a second or two MacAllister continued to stand there gaping and staring, with his astonished fellows pressing against him. He could command neither his tongue nor his wits. True, Bill Wing had mentioned a young lady as the governor's murderer; but he had expected nothing like this. What he had expected he did not know — and as to

what he had found he was still more in the fog. His wits were so clouded that he had not heard a word of the girl's speech. The spell was broken by Master Coffin, who appeared suddenly beside the invaders, having swung himself down from the deck of the poop.

"Good day to you, Master MacAllister," he said. "May I ask why you have been pleased to come aboard in such a furious manner?"

The Scot turned with an exclamation of sharp relief. "Coffin," he cried. "By heaven! it is good to set eyes on a sane man. Tell me, am I asleep or awake? And where is the governor? And what has happened to him? And what is all this trouble about?"

"The governor had a rush of blood to the head, but is now himself again," replied Harold. "But dismiss your boarding-party and step within and we'll explain everything to you. One moment! Mistress Duwaney, allow me to present you Master Donald MacAllister, your father's lieutenant in this plantation."

As the three entered the cabin, the governor turned his head on his pillow. "Ah, Donald, lad," said he, faintly, "I'm glad to see you again. It seems days instead of hours since I last clapt eyes on you. I lost my temper, lad, and suffered a seizure; but I feel better now, though infernal weak. I'll be fit to go ashore in a few minutes."

"I am thankful it is no worse, sir," returned MacAllister, with a note of genuine anxiety in his voice. "By old Bill Wing's story I believed that you had been done for. He as good as said that—that some one knocked you prostrate on the deck. I feared murder and treason and I know not what beside. I thought the world had gone mad—and so, to be with the majority, went mad myself."

Here he laughed shamefacedly and shot a glance at the girl.

"We have all been mad, I think. It has been a mad day," said she, blushing.

"And a great part of the madness still to be paid for," grumbled the governor.

MacAllister asked permission, and re-

ceived it promptly, to send his boat back to the shore with a true account of what had taken place aboard the "Good Fortune," that the apprehensions of the settlers might be quieted and old Bill Wing put to shame for his outrageous story. Then the three young people — the girl, Coffin and Mac-Allister — seated themselves on stools close to the locker on which the governor lay. The old gentleman looked them over with a calculating eye.

"Master Coffin," said he, "I'd be interested to hear how a man of the world like yourself came to allow my daughter to make such fools of us all — of the Company, the colony and the ship."

"Well, sir, I am forced to admit that I was helpless," replied Harold, in confusion. "It may be that I have a knowledge of camps and cities, sir; but in what way was such knowledge to help me? You can see how it was, sir — that is, you could if you did not happen to be her father. She wanted to make the voyage. All is said."

"Nay all is not said," returned the gov-

ernor, trying to hide a smile that tickled his lips. "I thought better of you, Master Coffin. You are the military commander of this good ship. Owing to your reputation as an able officer and a courageous fighter you hold this position of trust. Then how is it that you let yourself be made a fool of by the whim of a chit of a girl? I tell you, sir, you lack courage — aye, though you eat me alive for it! Bah! — to be afraid of a girl. But what of Spike? Where is the old sea-dog? I'll wager he is hiding from me, fearful that I'll put a few plain questions to him as to why he failed to obey my orders. He is old enough and ugly enough, I should think, to withstand the poutings and eye-twirlings of a self-willed girl."

The young men gazed at their feet in a fever of embarrassment. Elizabeth stooped forward and rested a light hand on her father's shoulder. "My dear," she murmured, "neither Master Coffin nor Master Spike are to blame in any way for my disobedient and foolish action. Neither of them knew that I was aboard, or had ever so much

as set eyes on me — to their knowledge — until the ship was far out at sea. They saw me come aboard, — but as I wore Tom's clothing, and his great cloak and boots, and went straight to my cabin, they mistook me for him. That, of course, was what I intended them to do."

"I suspected as much," said the governor, with a gleam in his eye that was not of anger. "I'd give five thousands of golden pounds, Bess, if I might transfer some of your spirit to your brother. Aye, that is heart's-truth, you madcap!" He lay silent for a few moments, blinking his round eyes at the deck-timber overhead. Then, "Send for Benjamin Spike to come to me," he ordered, shortly.

CHAPTER VIII

TWO GENTLEMEN AT ODDS

MACALLISTER, who felt that his presence could well be spared from a discussion that promised to become of a purely family nature, took it upon himself to find Master Spike and send him to the governor. He was glad of an excuse to get out of the cabin; but rather for the girl's sake than for his own. He felt how awkward for her must be the presence of a stranger at her father's exposure of family troubles. So he all but ran from the cabin and slammed the door behind him as if an imp of darkness were at his heels. He found Spike on the fore-castle-deck, gazing shoreward in feigned absorption.

“Welcome back to Bristol's Hope,” clapping the old navigator on the back and then grasping his hand with the utmost cordiality.

“An' a right queer welcome ye've give

me, Master MacAllister," returned Spike, "what with the governor boardin' me like a ragin', roarin' lion, so to speak, seekin' whom he may devour, as the Scriptures has it, an' layin' holt o' poor Master Coffin as if he would make an end o' him, an' then fallin' on the deck in as furious a fit as ever I see. Aye, a rare, warm welcome, master, ye may well name it! Then over the side comes you an' your rascals, with cold iron in your fists like so many Sally Rovers, ready to spit us all like Christmas geese."

MacAllister laughed. "I'll explain it to you later, Benjamin; but now the governor wants a word with you in the cabin."

"Lord help me!" exclaimed the mariner.

Spike went to the cabin feeling that he'd far rather walk into a den of thieves. Cap in hand, he stood before the governor. The great man gazed up at him for some time without speaking. At last he said, "What do you think you are, Benjamin — an honest shipmaster or a military ruffler from the Low Country wars? Where is your fine wide beard? And why are your great mustaches

curling up against your nose? Rip me, Benjamin, but an amazing change has come over you! What d'you mean by it, man? Is it for the better sailing of the ship and the better serving of the Company? "

"Your worship," returned Spike, "I made so bold as to trim up my whiskers a bit in honor o' the lady who came across as our passenger. I meant no harm by it, your worship."

"You, too!" exclaimed the governor, in mock severity. "You, Benjamin Spike, with grandsons sailing the seas, trimming your whiskers with the intent of catching the eye of a young lady. Tut, tut, man! I thought you were old and ugly enough to have more sense. I'll wager, now, you spent your time in writing poetry instead of your log-book."

"Ye be in the wrong of it there, your worship," replied Spike, gravely. "I but tried to make myself look less rough, so that the young lady might feel the more at her ease while seated at table with me. As for poetry, I leave it for them as has nought else to do."

"An honest answer, by my wig!" ex-

claimed the governor. "You are forgiven, Benjamin, for the trimming of your whiskers. But tell me now, if you can, how it comes that my daughter is here in the colony of Bristol's Hope and my son remains in Bristol?"

"I have explained that, father!" cried Elizabeth.

"Silence, child. I desire to hear Master Spike's explanation," said Duwaney, shaking a fat finger at her.

"Your worship," said Spike, deliberately, "I can make no fine tale o' the matter. I can't explain it, sir. The young lady wanted to come — an' I made so bold as to think ye'd be glad to clap eyes on her again. Also, your worship, old Ben Spike has a heart in his breast — an' no man with a heart, be he old or young, ugly or handsome, simple or gentle, could refuse a wish o' that beautiful young lady's. I'd have give her the whole blessed ship if she'd wanted it, your worship."

"This is all very irregular," said the governor, trying hard to conceal his satisfaction

at the old shipmaster's praise of his daughter. Well he knew the old man's keenness of vision into the human heart and honesty of utterance, and praise from him he knew to be of more value than from many a be-ribboned courtier. "As to giving her the ship, Benjamin — why, 'twould be a piratical deed, and I'd have to pay for it. But I'll say nothing more to you about this matter, for I see that the girl alone is to blame and that men who are capable of withstanding the cannon and cutlasses of pirates are as putty in the hands of a clever girl. But to oblige me, Benjamin, kindly let your whiskers expand sideways again and haul the points of your mustaches out of your eyes."

And that was the end of the governor's open displeasure over the matter of his daughter's arrival in the place of his son.

At an early hour of the morning following the "Good Fortune's" arrival in the little harbor of Bristol's Hope, far up the great Bay of Conception, Harold Coffin stood in the ship's waist, with his elbows on the gunwale, and gazed shoreward at the primitive

buildings of the little settlement. Particularly did he fix his glance on the largest of the houses, for that was the residence of the governor. The house was low and long, with a door and four small windows facing the water and a squat chimney at each end. In the east the light was growing and flooding into the little anchorage from the gleaming wastes of the outer bay. What the fisher-folk call a "loom" was on the water. The ship with her furled sails and taut cables, the skiffs and bullies swinging at the weed-hung stairs, the rocks and the fish-flakes at the edge of the crystal tide were all as if they hung in air. By some strange trick of light and atmosphere everything seemed to swim at twice its actual height from the water. This was not due to inverted reflections — but to what it was due go ask some ancient fisherman or some youthful scientist. I'll wager that their explanations of the phenomenon will differ as widely as east is from west.

The light grew steadily, evenly, as if a wind of ethereal flame blew in from the

golden reaches of the Atlantic without sound and without perceptible motion. The sky above the rocks and climbing forests of fir was washed from slate gray to frailest blue. The treetops up the river, the rough edges of the barren above the low cliffs and the chimneys and roofs of the houses glowed as if tipped with saffron fire. Azure streamers ascended straight and unbroken from the quiet habitations. Now even the governor's chimneys offered their sacrifice to the morning. Soon a pleasant sound of homely occupations drifted across the water from the hamlet to the ship. Men came down to the land-wash, the skiffs and bullies were untethered and headed for the open bay. From the dark of the fir-woods beyond the mouth of the little river came the cheery chant of the axes.

Harold Coffin, gazing at the governor's house, took little note of these things. He was sunk deep in meditations that were at once sweet and bitter.

An hour later, Coffin went ashore. Donald MacAllister met him on the shingle and

walked up the path with him to the door of the governor's house. Though these young men had spent several months of the previous summer together in this same out-corner of the world, working, exploring and hunting in company, evidently in the best of agreement and good-fellowship, yet no undeniable flame of friendship had sprung up in their hearts. Coffin had no such feeling of comradeship toward the Scot as he had toward John Percy — yet he and Percy had been comrades for little more than ten days amid the toil and excitements of a military campaign. With a man like Percy, as with a half dozen others he could name, he would share a last loaf or a full purse, a blanket, glory or death with unshaken good humor; but he had no desire to share anything with Master Donald MacAllister. He could find no explanation for this. He knew of nothing against MacAllister and did not suspect that there was anything against him. The Scot was brave, capable and industrious. He had sailed a voyage with the great Raleigh — a more or less uneventful voyage, 'tis true —

and had not been found wanting. Perhaps the Scot was too evidently proud of his big, strong, flawless body and his musty family; but with the last weakness, or fault of character, Coffin could find nothing wrong, for both he and Percy could show pride of blood with any bare-legged Highlander from the rocks. But this pride of robust health, displayed in every glance and gesture — this, beyond a doubt, stuck in poor Master Coffin's crop more sickeningly than a knowledge of crime.

Why MacAllister did not feel a warm friendship for Coffin is, perhaps, less difficult to understand. Poor as they were, his reasons were positive. He disliked the thin youth's personal appearance. He disliked his eyes, his narrow chest, and his occasional long-winded stories of his remarkable swordsmanship. Having heard from other sources that these stories were true he disliked them all the more heartily. He could acknowledge, without rancor, the prowess of a big, deep-chested cavalier; but to know that a frail, unhealthy lad like Harold Coffin

was his equal in any manly accomplishment went sorely against his pride.

These two young men walked elbow to elbow across the rocky beach and up the narrow path to the governor's door. They smiled at each other and asked and replied to questions with charming affability. But MacAllister was out of spirits. In his budget of news from home, which he had spent half the night in reading, he had learned of the execution of Sir Walter Raleigh. The thought of it lay like a burden on his mind, for he had sailed with that great man and known him in the height of his energy and glory. But pride — Scotch pride — forbade his speaking of the tragedy to his companion. Coffin had never sailed with Sir Walter. MacAllister did not want either his pity or his views on the matter.

At the door the Scot turned aside, for he was on his way to the woods where the choppers were at work. But Coffin made a remark that brought him back.

“ We received a visit from Captain John Percy, of the ‘ Jaguar,’ ” he said.

“Percy!” exclaimed the other. “He was my commander. I made a voyage to the Orinoco aboard the ‘Jaguar.’”

This was old news to Harold, who had heard it several times during the previous summer and always somewhat in the manner of a boast. He was tired of this boast of one uneventful voyage.

“What did he want with the ‘Good Fortune’?” asked the Scot.

“He came aboard to see me,” replied Coffin. “We were both of Bragg’s Brigade, in the Low Countries, some years ago.”

This was no news to Donald, who had heard it before from the same source. He had never fought in the Low Countries himself — nor anywhere else, for that matter — and was not interested in the subject. “How did he know you were aboard?” he asked.

“The truth is, I told him so myself,” replied the other, smiling. “He overhauled us and sent a round-shot after us, evidently mistaking the ‘Good Fortune’ for something else. When we came within hailing

distance things took a change for the better. Percy and two of his gentlemen came and had wine with us; and throughout the remainder of the trip the 'Jaguar' kept us in sight, for protective purposes, until we got well inside the bay."

"Where was he bound for?" inquired MacAllister, in wonder.

"That would be hard to say," replied Harold, "for he has cast his fortunes on the high seas and holds neither himself nor his ship responsible to any man. Our old comrade is one of these erring captains of which the world is now beginning to talk."

"A pirate, d'ye mean?" exclaimed Donald.

"No, I should not give him that dishonorable name," replied the other. "He has robbed, I think, but never shed innocent blood. He fights as honestly now as ever he fought. He preys upon the pirates even as an eagle may prey upon a hawk. The humble little merchant-ships go free of him, or at most contribute a few pounds of provisions to his stores. John Percy strikes high, look-

ing fearlessly for game worthy of his reputation and the guns and spirit of his ship. Embittered by the unjust death of his old captain — and yours — he engaged the King's ship 'Heroic' and trounced her so severely that she was thankful to be allowed to crawl away."

"A ship of King James's! The poor fellow must be mad!" exclaimed Donald MacAllister.

"He considers the violent death to which Sir Walter was brought as nothing other than murder. In fighting the 'Heroic' he felt that he was striking a blow at the murderer," said Coffin, quietly.

"It is treason — high treason," whispered the Scotchman. "I should have given Percy, my old captain, credit for more loyalty and strength of character than to thus turn traitor to his king for a private cause. Yes, a private cause, no matter how pitiful it may be. I, too, have loved that gentle knight. Blithely would I have faced death for him. But I do not say *yea* or *nay* to the king's action. Who am I to judge the work

of my liege lord and sovereign — and who is John Percy to judge it? ”

“ Raleigh was his friend,” said Coffin.

“ And King James? ”

“ I fear that His Majesty is guilty of weakness rather than of viciousness. He is the tool of unscrupulous courtiers.”

Donald MacAllister stared at the speaker in amazement and anger. He could scarce believe his ears. “ Are you speaking of the king? ” he asked.

“ Of the king and no other — God save His Majesty and enlighten his wits,” replied Harold Coffin, with composure.

“ It seems to me, Master Coffin, that your wits are more in need of enlightenment than His Majesty’s,” said MacAllister.

“ Which concerns nobody but myself and my friends. No foolishness of mine could ever result in such a crime against individual and national rights as the execution of Sir Walter Raleigh,” returned Coffin, gazing steadily upward into the other’s face.

“ Have a care! ” cried the Scot. “ This sounds like treason! ”

“ Better treason against one’s foreign-bred king than against a comrade and friend,” replied Harold Coffin.

For a little while the two young men stood motionless and silent, staring into each other’s eyes. Then Donald MacAllister turned and strode away. With a deep sigh — whether of relief or disappointment who shall say — Harold Coffin rapped on the door of the governor’s house with his gloved knuckles.

CHAPTER IX

THE UNWELCOME VISITORS

MASTER DUWANEY was in his bed, still suffering from the excitement and loss of blood of the day before. It was Elizabeth who brought his regrets to Harold. They talked together for a few minutes in a friendly but commonplace manner. The girl said that she already loved Bristol's Hope but sorely missed Master Coffin and Master Spike from the breakfast table. Harold kept his eyes from her face and allowed neither her voice nor her words to strike deeper than his ears. He felt nervous and restless. As if the hopeless love for the girl were not enough for him to bear now the aggravating discussion with the Scotchman had given a fresh shock to his nerves. Pleading the need of his help aboard the ship, where the work of discharging the stores had already commenced, he excused himself to the girl and went away.

Pausing at the top of the path that led down to the shingle, he noticed three small vessels in the bay bearing in toward the harbor of Bristol's Hope. In these times and in these waters, three strange ships, no matter how innocent in appearance, claimed the attention on sight. After one glance, Coffin continued to descend the path, but at a quickened pace. Just as he reached the land-wash MacAllister and six of his men came upon it by another route. The men still carried their axes in their hands; but the Scot had a musket across his shoulder.

“What do you expect?” asked Coffin.

“The Devon fishermen — our worst enemies,” replied MacAllister.

“Then I suppose the discharging of the cargo had better be stopped for an hour or so, until we know more of these fellows' intentions?”

“I should recommend it, certainly. And will you be so kind as to tell our men and boats to pull ashore immediately.”

The “Good Fortune's” gig was still at the edge of the tide, with two of the ship's

crew standing beside her bow. Coffin ran to her and sprang aboard. The men, without waiting for any word of command, pushed the little boat off the pebbles, sprang in and took their places on the thwarts. They bent their backs to the heavy oars with a will, sniffing excitement in the mild, sunlit air. As the gig raced under the ship's stern and swung around it, the boats that had been at work ferrying the stores pushed clear and headed shoreward, weighted gunwale-deep. They, too, had read the situation at a glance.

Spike met Coffin the moment he sprang from the rail to the deck. A cutlass was belted to his great thigh. "Ye may take my word for it that yonder come three o' these accursed fishin' admirals," he exclaimed, pointing seaward.

"But the day of those gentry is gone. The reign of the fishing admiral is dead," replied Harold, though he put no faith in the statement which he so glibly made. Though a law of the Crown, he knew it to be but little more than a theory, owing to the strength and impudence and greed of the West Coun-

try fishermen. Only in those harbors in which the planters were stronger than the fishers did the new and enlightened law hold good.

“ The day o’ the high-handed, high-bellied fishin’ admirals be gone — on paper,” replied Spike, bitterly. “ But I tell ye, master, they care no more for paper laws than for empty pistols. If we don’t let ’em have a squint at the muzzles o’ our big guns they’ll be dumpin’ their ballast into the anchorage afore a half-hour be gone.”

“ I agree with you, Benjamin. I’ll go the rounds now and see that the pieces are ready to show to advantage at any moment,” said the commander. “ These greedy, lawless fellows are from my own country; but I am firm for the plantations.”

“ For my part,” replied Spike, “ I like a full-fledged, glass-chawin’, blood-spittin’ pirate better nor these harbor-hogs o’ fishin’ admirals. They’ll rob as quick, an’ kill as quick as any Sally Rover — an’ they’ll set fire to a plantation for the sake o’ a quintal o’ fish.”

Harold looked to his batteries, found them all in good order, and then took up a position on the poop from which he had a clear view of the approaching vessels. They were blunt-nosed craft, of two masts with heavy yards and wide, weather-stained sails. They were low amidships, but raised fore and aft to the height of two decks. They rode high in ballast. They raced in on a fair, brisk wind, with not more than half a mile from the bow of the leader to the stern of the hindmost. That they were West Country fishing ships but newly arrived on the coast, and therefore eager to find anchorage, harbor-room for boats and stages and convenient fishing grounds, Harold entertained not a shadow of doubt.

Soon the leader of the three new arrivals began to lessen sail and speed, and swam easily into the harbor of Bristol's Hope and let an anchor splash down from her starboard bow with a fine air of assurance. Then a square of blue bunting crawled up to her mast-head and flapped impudently in the wind. At that old Spike, who had joined the

commander on the poop, clapped his great right paw on the rail.

“What did I tell ye?” he cried. “’Tis the flag o’ the harbor admiral!”

Coffin laughed. But he was puzzled. “But even if the old laws concerning such matters still held, the ‘Good Fortune’ would be the flag-ship of the harbor, being the first ship in,” he said.

“Not by the old law,” replied Spike. “The old, dead law called for a fishin’ ship — an’ they’d class us as a supply ship.”

“The governor will be in danger of another seizure when he discovers the audacity of these bold visitors,” remarked Harold.

“Aye, ’twill rouse him worse nor drop-pin’ a keg on to his sore toe,” returned the other.

Up in the governor’s house the trouble had already begun. The first word of the sighting of the three strange vessels had roused Master Duwaney to a sitting posture in his snug bed. The word that the leading ship had actually entered the harbor of Bristol’s Hope, without so much as “by your leave,”

had sent the worthy magistrate hobbling to the window. The sight of the blue flag — the flag of the harbor admiral — had driven all memory of yesterday's loss of blood from the governor's mind. He shouted for Master MacAllister; he shouted for Elizabeth; he bundled himself in blankets and swore he'd not dress himself properly until the impudent fisherman had learned the power of the Company, the colony and the governor.

Elizabeth was the first to come to his cry, and was sent away to find the lieutenant. The lieutenant soon appeared, looking almost as indignant as his superior.

“ They've begun to throw their ballast over — in the anchorage! ” he exclaimed. “ They were warned from the ship, but paid no heed. And now the second has come to anchor and run up the flag of the vice-admiral. ”

“ Give me my sword, ” bellowed the governor. “ Give me my stick, and your arm as well. And my wig and hat. Where is the commission? Bring it along, together with the laws and the bylaws. Rip me!

but they'll discover who is governor here, and who owns this harbor!''

Swathed in robes and blankets, with his gold sword-belt buckled around his great waist and his lame foot wrapped in flannel and the other in a boot, with a powdered wig on his head and a cocked hat atop that, leaning heavily on MacAllister's arm and striking the ground with the iron-shod point of his stick, the governor issued forth to strike dismay and a knowledge of the law into the hearts of those high-bellied men of Devon. MacAllister carried a copy of the Company's charter, Duwaney's commission, the laws of England and the laws and bylaws of the colony. And he had a sword at his hip and a brace of pistols in his belt, though he had no hand to clap to them at the moment.

The men of the colony, numbering twenty in all, were on the shingle. Half of them were already fully armed with muskets and cutlasses, and the rest were only awaiting the order to run for their weapons. At sight of the governor, and in spite of his amazing appearance, they pulled off their caps and

cheered. At the same moment, the "Good Fortune's" gig touched the beach and Bob Sill, master's mate, sprang ashore and hurried up to the governor.

"Master Coffin has sent me to learn your worship's pleasure and to get your worship's orders concerning these trespassers," he said, bowing three times to Duwaney and twice to MacAllister.

"Tell him to stand to his guns and await further orders," replied the governor. Bob Sill bowed again, returned to the gig and so back to the "Good Fortune," thinking he'd made a trip ashore to very little purpose — for the gunners had been at their stations for the last twenty minutes. The governor and his lieutenant entered the largest of the plantation's skiffs, and with four stout lads at the oars and another holding aloft the red and gold flag of the Company in the bows, pulled out toward the innermost of the three unwelcome vessels. By this time the third of the visitors had crowded into the harbor and let go her anchor. From the little settlement, from the strip of shingle,

from the " Good Fortune " and the decks of the bold invaders, the governor's boat was watched with keen interest and various emotions.

At a nod from the governor the skiff lay motionless, distant about thirty yards from the lawless brig " Peep O' Day." Over the side of the shameless brig the ballast was still flying and splashing. Duwaney got painfully to his feet in the stern-sheets of the skiff, about to hail the brig with his own authoritative voice. But there was no limit to the impudence of these fish-hungry invaders. Even as Duwaney opened his mouth a husky voice from the brig roared, " Boat ahoy! What boat be that? An' who be the fat old lady in the cocked hat? "

A silence followed during which the wind seemed to baffle and the sunlight to tremble. Donald MacAllister gasped. The governor grew purple in the face. Suddenly his voice got clear of his throat.

" This is Bristol's Hope! " he roared, " and I am Thomas Duwaney, the governor. I give you five minutes in which to get your

anchors up and twenty minutes to get out of this harbor. Lads, pull 'round and back to shore."

As the skiff turned and gathered way the same voice cried from the brig, "Ye look as if ye'd hopped out o' bed in a desperate hurry, Tom. Mind the wind don't carry away them blankets."

Rage shook the governor and he sat down heavily. Donald could think of nothing to say. The men at the oars kept their eyes upon the bottom of the boat or the sky overhead. Duwaney twisted himself around and glared back at the brig. "I mean what I say, you rascals," he bellowed.

"Ye flabby oyster o' a figger-head! Ye keg-paunched mistake for a governor! Ye bull-voiced, chicken-hearted mattress o' a blue-nosed alderman! Go back to bed — or ye'll be carried there for the last time! I be admiral o' this here harbor for the nex' seven days, an' I care no more nor a snap o' my fingers for you nor your company," bawled the ill-mannered ruffian on the "Peep O' Day."

The governor trembled, but from the agony of his rage could find neither words nor voice for reply. But he managed to wave a shaking hand toward the " Good Fortune." The skiff ran close under the ship's bows. Coffin looked over the rail. " What orders, sir? " he asked.

Duwaney tried to speak, but managed nothing more intelligible than a gurgle. MacAllister looked at him keenly and then up at the commander of the ship. " You'll please show your teeth to them, Master Coffin," he cried. " And ye'd better let fly a round or two, high and harmless."

The governor nodded, in confirmation of his subaltern's words, and Coffin waved his hat and disappeared from the ship's rail.

That side of the " Good Fortune " which lay toward the " Peep O' Day " lifted two heavy lids, like some fabulous monster awakened from sleep, and full upon the brig disclosed two staring eyes the pupils of which were muzzles of great guns.

" An ancient trick," remarked the master of the brig to his mate. " Their furious can-

non be no more nor logs o' painted and graven timber. She carries no piece greater nor a falconet."

This had been true of the "Good Fortune" on her first voyage; but thanks to Harold Coffin's foresight and able statement of conditions and requirements to the Directors in Bristol, it was true no longer. The teeth he bared to the would-be harbor admiral had jaws and muscles behind them and exceedingly sharp edges.

The master of the "Peep O' Day" spoke confidently, and his burly mate heard him with faith and admiration. They leaned their elbows on the rail and grinned across at the open ports of the "Good Fortune."

"This here sore-toed marchant, Tom Duwaney, thinks to fright three ships o' the West Country with a loud bellow o' wind an' two sticks o' oak," said the master.

"That he do," replied the mate, with relish.

"The fright will be t'other way, I'm thinkin', when we gets that fine house o' his fairly ablaze," said the master.

“Aye, that it will,” agreed the mate, staining the green water of the harbor with a liberal contribution of the juice of the Virginian weed. Even in his way of expectorating he showed that he was entirely satisfied with himself and his commander.

“We’ll root out this here dog-in-the-manger o’ a colony, an’ open this handy little harbor to honest fishermen, as sure as grog warms a man’s heart an’ puddin’ comforts his belly,” said the master.

The mate rolled his quid between his jaws, seeking in his heavy mind for some reply suitable to this last splendid flight of eloquence of the master’s. But he did not find what he sought. The “Good Fortune” replied instead!

With one banging, clapping whoop that set the very rocks ashouting; with two fan-shaped flashes of yellow flame and two belching clouds of white smoke; with two solid shot awhistling between the brig’s masts did the “Good Fortune” make reply to the master of the “Peep O’ Day.” From insolent self-assurance the three brigs fell into

the most desperate state of confusion. Commands were bellowed. Two boats were lowered from each vessel, manned by unarmed fellows straining on long oars. Capstans were manned. By the time that the smoke of the ship's guns had vanished on the wind the three brigs were crawling slowly toward the mouth of the harbor, each towed by her own two boats. Then a ringing, taunting roar went up from the "Good Fortune" and the men of the colony clustered on the beach.

CHAPTER X

A FIGHT FOR POSTERITY

THE three brigs cleared the northern cape of the entrance of Bristol's Hope, rounding it close in-shore and so vanishing from the sight of the " Good Fortune ; " but from the elevation on which the hamlet stood their tops could still be seen. It had been easy enough to drive them out of the harbor, for nowhere in the harbor would they have found anchorage out of range of the guns of the Company's ship — of the guns that had proved themselves to be cast of the right metal. But now they were in free water and, owing to the intervening ridge of rocks, out of danger from the " Good Fortune's " batteries. And yet they threatened the colony more seriously in their present berths than they had when anchored in the harbor. Until they commenced open hostilities Duwaney could make no fresh move against

them, for the waters of the great bay were free to all honest fishermen, and along the unoccupied coast they were entitled to such space as they might require for fish-sheds and drying-stages. As Duwaney had said to MacAllister, weeks before, in this respect the fishers of Devon were a greater danger to the colonies than pirates and other freebooters and murderers by profession. Though the governor felt sure that these fellows had come to Bristol's Hope with the intention of destroying his plantation, now that they were out of his own harbor and not actively and openly striking at him, he could not interfere with them. If he should catch them discharging their ballast within a certain distance from the shore, or killing people without sufficient reason, or tearing down other honest folks' stages and stores, his power as a magistrate and as governor of the colony would enable him to fine them, to hang them, to put them in irons or to drive them forth from the Bay of Conception — or, at least, to try to do these things. But so long as they remained in apparent quiet,

even though he knew they were planning an attack upon him, he must await their pleasure and keep the " Good Fortune " swinging idly at her anchors.

Master Duwaney felt the injustice and futility of his position keenly. By all that was reasonable and fair he should be allowed to send the " Good Fortune " out and drive the insolent brigs clear over the horizon. As it was, he must patiently wait for the men from the brigs to sneak ashore and make a bloody attempt at the overthrow of the settlement. But he did not sit and twiddle his thumbs. The insults of the master of the " Peep O' Day " had aroused him far too thoroughly to allow of any inactivity on his part — at least while they still held fresh in his mind. Accompanied by Donald MacAllister, he hobbled to the ridge of the cape and studied the three brigs, now lying peacefully at anchor, through his telescope. Already a score of men had landed and were busy felling small fir trees with which to construct stages whereon to dry their fish.

" I think they will play this game for a

couple of days, to quiet my mind before they strike. They are as full of guile as of impudence and wickedness," said the governor.

"If they would but fell a few trees of greater dimensions, they would save us a deal of trouble, sir," remarked MacAllister, gazing sternly down, between narrowed lids, at the busy fishermen.

"Riddles!" exclaimed the governor. "Dang your riddles! Tell me what you mean, lad, in plain English."

"Timbers for the gallows-trees," returned the other, crisply.

"You have a pretty wit, Donald," replied Duwaney. "But I'd enjoy it better if my poor toe wasn't so confounded hot. But 'twas aptly said, I must admit. I only hope, lad, that 'twill be the deserving ones who grace the trees. It may be that our own precious necks get into the ropes. These fellows are bitter, strong, and heart and soul against the peaceful settlement of this land. Greedy for to-day, they give no thought to posterity. They'd hang us, quick as winking, if they ever got the upper hand of us."

“ We are too strong for them,” replied the Scot, with conviction in his tone. “ With the guns of the ship and the help of the crew we are too heavy for them. We could stand off a force of almost double their number, in our present condition. But it would be wise, I think, to land two or three of the lighter pieces from the ship and set them up so as to guard the rear and left flank of the settlement.”

“ Well thought of,” replied Duwaney. “ I had the same plan in my own mind, you may be sure. It shall be done without loss of time. And you are right—if they do not catch us napping they’ll make nothing of us. As you say, we are reinforced in the nick of time. They have come a day too late. The ship will save us from a front attack and her crew will more than double our strength. And if all I’ve heard of him is true, young Coffin will prove a host in himself.”

“ So one would judge from his own tales, at any rate,” replied Donald MacAllister. But he was ashamed of himself the moment

the mean words were passed his lips. His natural manliness — and the very pride that was his greatest fault — rebuked him swiftly for this petty, underhand stroke.

Duwaney looked at him curiously, with a half-smile twitching the corners of his clean-shaven lips. He considered himself a keen reader of the hearts and minds of men. “ So the trouble shows itself so soon, does it? ” he mused. “ The two young blades are rivals and enemies already, are they? This jealousy is worse than powder and shot — the weapon of the devil himself, I do believe. This is the second fruit of Bess’s mad prank, the first being the fit that all but brought me to my death. ’Twill be worse before ’tis better, no doubt — and both these young fools as poor as vestry mice.” On the face of it the worthy man was wrong, for we know that these youths had never felt any real friendship for one another and that their present trouble was due to a purely political difference. Yes, the governor was wrong. But who shall say that he was not right, for all that? Being an older man, per-

haps he knew more about it than the youths themselves.

“ I have heard something in his favor from another source,” said the governor.

“ I do not doubt it for a moment, sir. I believe he has proved his courage, and his skill as a soldier, on more than one occasion,” replied MacAllister, with forced heartiness in his voice.

Duwaney nodded. “ Well said, lad. Now we’ll step back to the house and perfect our plans for defence. We must send for Coffin and Spike to join the council of war. Coffin is a seasoned campaigner and old Spike has mixed in more broils, afloat and ashore, than we have fingers and toes.”

He leaned heavily on the young man’s arm, and prodded in front of his game foot with his stick, as they moved slowly down the rough flank of the hill. His humor was lightening. “ Let them strike when they please, they’ll find old Tom Duwaney ready for them,” he said.

“ Does it not seem to you, sir, that it would be wiser for us to plan the defence of

Bristol's Hope without assistance from the ship? ” asked Donald, diffidently.

“ Why so, lad? what is your idea? ”

“ We are responsible for the safety of the colony, sir.”

“ And they are responsible for the safety of the ship, and for the money invested in her. They might escape with the vessel if the colony fell — though, mark you, I don't believe they'd try to escape — but where would the voyage be? How would they get a cargo to take home to Bristol? And what sort of a story would they have to tell of the overthrow of the colony — perhaps of the death of my daughter — while they sailed out of the harbor because they were not responsible? Tush! Twaddle! You talk foolishness, sir! They are in this trouble as deep as we are, and they'll not shirk their duty. They are better able to get us out of the trouble than we are to get out ourselves. I am neither a soldier nor a sailor, and I doubt if you are much of either yourself, lad.”

“ Have it your own way, sir, of course.”

“ I certainly intend to do so, Master Mac-Allister.”

“ I am all for the safety and progress of the colony and the best interests of the Company, sir. But I take it unkindly of you to say that I am neither a soldier nor a sailor. I have had both military and naval training under Sir Walter Raleigh.”

“ The gentleman who so recently lost his head! ”

“ Yes, sir; but an able man for all that.”

“ So you have often told me, lad. Indeed, before we knew that his career had come to such a disastrous end you seemed to be a deal warmer in championing him than you are now.”

“ My admiration for his memory is still warm, sir. But he was found guilty of a grave misdemeanor and has suffered the penalty. He offended greatly in carrying on a private war against Spain when Spain and England were at peace. To defend him in this one must discredit the king. I hold my loyalty to the Crown above friendship.”

“ A noble sentiment, lad — but one that

exhibits strength of head rather than strength of heart," replied Duwaney. "But here we are; and now for work instead of words." He halted and gazed searchingly into the young man's face. "And by the same token, Donald MacAllister, you'll now forget your petty private jealousy and give yourself heartily to the best protection of the colony and the ship."

"You do me an injustice, sir," complained Donald. "I assure you that I feel no jealousy toward anybody."

The governor puffed out his clean-shaven lips as if he were about to whistle. "Then so much the more comfortable for all of us," he said.

A council of war, composed of the governor, MacAllister, Coffin and Spike, was held in the governor's house. Duwaney's plans were agreed upon without loss of time and with but slight amendments. The men of the colony were mustered under arms, inspected and told off in four watches of five men to the watch. Even the invalids were present, with their muskets on their shoul-

ders, finding the excitement more beneficial to their healths than any amount of physic. Each of these guards, or watches, was reinforced by three men from the "Good Fortune." One watch, in charge of John Cope, the colony's smith, went on guard and sentry duty at sunset. After receiving brief instructions in their duties from Master Coffin, they occupied the ridge on the left of the settlement which commanded the anchorage of the three brigs, and the top of the low cliff in the rear. Another watch and a boat's crew from the ship were set to the heavy task of landing three falconets and such ammunition as might be required. The remaining watches were not employed at the time; but one was to go on sentry duty at eleven o'clock and the other at three in the morning.

Spike returned to the "Good Fortune;" but Harold Coffin, feeling that his services were required ashore more urgently than aboard the ship, remained with the governor and MacAllister. By ten o'clock two of the guns were mounted on the ridge overlooking the brigs. Then the governor invited the

two officers to partake of a bowl of punch that was being prepared by his body-servant, who was a master-hand at the brewing of drinks. They made their way down to the house, the two young men all but carrying the governor bodily — for the old man had been on his feet almost continuously since the first bout of words with the fishermen. The door was opened to them by Elizabeth. She stood for a second with the warm illumination of fire-light and candle-light behind her, peering out anxiously.

“What is it? Is any one hurt?” she asked, anxiously.

“We are tired and thirsty. Is the punch ready?” replied the governor, hoisting his lame foot high as his companions, lifting on his elbows, raised him to the threshold. Elizabeth stepped back and the three moved slowly into the warm and cheerful room. Harold, loosing his hold on the governor’s arm, turned to close the door.

“Hark!” he exclaimed. Then he clapped his hat on his head and dashed to the outer darkness, leaving the door swinging wide

behind him. The girl uttered a low cry. Duwaney and MacAllister stared at each other, listening intently. Duwaney ran the tip of his tongue along his dry lips. "What is it? What pricked him?" he whispered. As if in answer, a musket-shot banged out from the direction of the ridge, starting thumping echoes on every side. This was followed by an irregular fusillade of great and lesser reports, mad yells and loud shouting. MacAllister snatched his sword from its scabbard and sprang through the doorway. The governor bawled, "To arms! To arms!" Then, in spite of his daughter's protests, he picked up his heavy walking stick and stumped out of the house.

To return to Harold Coffin. The sound that had caught his attention when he was about to close the governor's door was a faint, muffled cry. He was at the foot of the rising ground, running and stumbling, when the fusillade broke out. "To the defence!" he cried. He heard men running and scrambling beside him, and even saw the dim shapes of the nearest. He managed

to gather a dozen of them about him as he ascended the long, rough slope of the ridge, and cautioned them to make no mistake between friend and foe. Arriving at the summit he found the guard still in possession and the little battery of falconets undisturbed. The attack had been sharp and short, one sentry had been killed with a knife-thrust, and most of the firing had been done by the defenders. The invaders had retreated half-way down the seaward slope and from among the rocks were discharging their muskets and pistols irregularly and ineffectually. The colonists replied to them with firing equally irregular and harmless.

Harold could make nothing of the situation. He could not bring his knowledge of the fishermen and their half-hearted attack to agree in his mind. He ordered the men to scatter along the ridge and to cease firing. The three brigs below were invisible in the dark and showed no lights. Presently Mac-Allister came scrambling up, close at hand.

“ Coffin! Where are you? ” he called, guardedly.

“ This way,” replied Coffin. The Scot found him in a minute.

“ Did they attack? What are they doing now? Where are they? ” he asked, stammering with excitement. Harold understood his emotion, remembering his own first experience of a night attack. He told him what he knew.

“ And what d’ye make of it? ” inquired MacAllister, breathlessly.

“ Some trickery, I fear. This was but a pretence at attack, to cover something more determined,” replied Coffin. “ They may try to board the ‘ Good Fortune ’ and capture her, knowing that many of the crew are ashore. As almost all the stores are still in the hold, that would prove a shrewd stroke to the colony.”

“ For heaven’s sake, suggest something! ” exclaimed the other. “ This sort of thing is new to me. My brain seems flying in a dozen directions.”

“ Then let me take six men and a boat and start out for the ship,” returned Coffin. “ Then bring your battery to bear on that

point, about where the brigs are riding at anchor, and open as heavy a fire as possible. Keep the gunners strongly supported by lads with cutlasses and clubs, for close-quarter work. If I find the ship in danger I must remain aboard to fight her. Whatever the enemy is about, your gun-fire on the brigs will distract him from his purpose."

"I will do as you say," replied Donald MacAllister.

CHAPTER XI

THE FIGHT CONTINUES

WITH six of his own men at his heels, Harold Coffin hastened down toward the village and the harbor, eager to get aboard the "Good Fortune." His fears for her safety grew with every second. His suspicion that the attack on the ridge was but a blind to hide the striking of a more deadly blow was now a conviction. In his excited imagination he could hear the muffled, stealthy oars of the fishermen creeping in upon the unsuspecting ship. He passed the governor puffing and grumbling up the slope; and though the great man bellowed a volley of questions after him he hurried on without pausing to reply. He saw Elizabeth standing in the open doorway of the governor's house. There he halted for a moment, letting his men pass him and turn ahead of him into

the narrow path that led between the tumbled rocks down to the narrow beach.

“The attack on the ridge has been repulsed; but I fear the ship may be in danger,” he said.

She put out her hand and touched his. “It is a great comfort to me to know that you are here to help us,” she said.

“If you hear hot firing from the ridge do not feel alarmed, for 'twill be nothing but a ruse,” was all he could think of by way of a reply. Then he lifted his hat, turned and followed his men down to the land-wash.

The beach was deserted. Coffin and his men moved quietly down to the water and along the edge of the tide until they found a boat. They climbed aboard, cast her loose, and moved out toward the ship's riding-light. At a whispered command, the rowers sat motionless. What was it they heard somewhere in the blackness on the left, low on the hidden water? Was it the creak of ash on birchen thole-pin or the cry of a bird? Was it the dip and splash of a carelessly handled oar-blade or the breaking of a little

wave against a rock? "Pull ahead, lads. Soft and steady," whispered Harold.

Just then, one of the little cannon on the ridge belched out its thunder and flame. While the echoes still shook the harbor the other gun banged tremendously. Again Harold allowed his boat to drift idly. The echoes of the second report died away and in the silence that followed Coffin and his men heard a faint stir of life upon the shrouded water—the soft forging along of invisible boats, a furtive splashing, a guarded exclamation. Then they knew that the boats from the brigs were close about them. Some, perhaps, were already under the side of the "Good Fortune." That the purpose of the nearer boats was somewhat shaken by the fire of the falconets was very evident. Again the little battery on the ridge shook the night with its racketing voices. With the return of quiet, Harold heard unmistakable sounds of human activity around him—the creak of oars, the dipping of blades and anxious questions and whispered replies. He drew a pistol from

his belt, corrected the priming, extended it in the direction of the stealthy noises and pulled the trigger. The bang and flash of it acted like magic. The prow of a boat appeared, close at hand, a black shadow against the blackness, and vanished again. Wood thumped on wood. Oars churned the black water. A torch flamed above the rail of the "Good Fortune," amidships. Another blazed angrily in her high bows and still another astern. In the red light on the water close under her side lay two boats full of men. And all these things—the confused sounds, the flaming of the torches and the sudden picture of the ship and the little boats—conjured out of the darkness by the banging of a pistol!

The voice of old Spike challenging the boats rang across the outer dark from the red-lit hull. More boats swam into the narrow strip of illuminated water. Muskets and pistols gave tongue. The fight was on. To add to the tumult of the real battle, Mac-Allister continued to fire his falconets at the invisible brigs.

Harold Coffin gave whispered instructions to his men. The boat circled the ship, unseen but seeing everything. The boarders were being driven back at every point. Coffin's boat crept closer, nearing a point amidships on the shoreward side where the attack was strongest. At a sign, his men drew their oars inboard and took their muskets in their hands. None of these weapons were of the new flintlock pattern but all were old and tested matchlocks. A light was struck under the shield of a cloak and the matches were lit. Then a volley belched forth that shook the boat and struck dismay into the hearts of the fellows clawing for a foothold on the ship's rail. Only one of them was hit, 'tis true; but in sheer terror at being attacked in the rear so unexpectedly, a dozen or more dropped back, some into the boats and some into the water. Coffin's men laid aside their muskets and again took to the oars. They rounded the ship and drew in on her other side where a brisk hand-to-hand struggle was going forward along the low bulwarks. They drew closer this time and the muskets

were discharged with even greater execution than before.

This second stroke from the outer darkness, together with the stubborn defence of the lads aboard the ship, ended the attack for the night. Leaving eight of their men and one of their boats in the deep water under the "Good Fortune," they pulled sullenly away from the illumination of the torches. They were puzzled and furious. Who was it, they asked from boat to boat, with daring and wit enough to put out from the shore, warn the ship of her danger by discharging a pistol and then join so effectively in the engagement? The more reckless and angry of them were for landing and attacking the plantation from the front; but their leaders, knowing that the colonists had been reinforced by men from the ship, and having suffered sufficiently already for one night, urged them to return to the brigs. So they pulled out of the harbor — and Coffin's boat followed them close, unheard and unseen, until they rounded the little cape.

Coffin returned to the "Good Fortune," hailed her elaborately for fear of being mistaken for an enemy, and went over the side. He was warmly welcomed by Spike. Moved out of his customary stolidity, the old man grasped both his hands and then, as if his feelings were not yet satisfactorily expressed, embraced him affectionately.

"I heard ye, master!" he cried. "Ye don't have to tell me who let fly that pistol an' put the shots into them beggars' backs. I knowed ye'd not forget the old ship in the hour o' her tribulation. We'd have had our hands full — an' maybe more'n we could well hold, if ye hadn't come along an' peppered 'em in the starn-sheets."

"But how did you know who it was, old shipmate?" asked Harold, quite forgetting his weariness in the satisfaction derived from Spike's words and manner.

"Would I think it was the governor?" returned the mariner. "No; for he'd ha' come in a lighted boat, a-roarin' like a bull. Nor would I take it for Master MacAllister? No, sir — for he'd not ha' come at all."

“ Come now, Benjamin, why d’ye say so of Master MacAllister? ” asked Harold.

“ He’d never think on it,” answered Spike. “ He’d be standin’ on the shore a-wavin’ his sword ’round his head, bless his heart.”

Three of the men of the ship had been severely wounded and seven had received slight injuries; but not any had been killed. Coffin remained aboard for more than an hour, helping James with surgical work, seeing to the comfort of the sufferers, lending a hand in the shifting of two of the guns and arranging a dozen things in anticipation of another attack. Then he went ashore, reported to the governor, went the rounds of the sentries and guards, and worked for a while with the men in the construction of a small stockade for the protection of one of the guns. The sun was out of the eastern sea when he at last unbuckled his sword and pistols and lay down beside the hearth in the main room of the governor’s house. His folded cloak made a comfortable pillow. The glow from the birch coals touched his face deliciously and crept through his damp

clothing. In a minute he was sound asleep.

The day and night of fatigue, excitement and exposure had acted like a tonic on Master Duwaney. Righteous anger against the lawless fishermen glowed in his belly like a coal, and heart and brain were enlivened by military exhilaration. He was proud of the defence made by the colony and the ship, and honestly believed that to his own generalship was due the success. He felt that he had missed his vocation in following mercantile pursuits all his life. He should have been a military man. Though he had not retired to his bed until close upon dawn he was out of it again and fully dressed even to both his boots before poor Coffin had enjoyed an hour's sleep. A desire to start the machinery of combat to activity again — a thirst for another draught of the excitement of battle — drove him from his warm blankets. He was determined to reverse the position of things this morning — to take the offensive part — to strike first and to strike hard. The fishermen had played into his hands.

They had staked all on one throw, and so had lost as heavily as they had risked. Had they succeeded in destroying the colony they might easily have escaped the punishment of the law in distant England; but in failing they had put themselves on the footing of common pirates and had left intact the very power whose duty it was to punish them.

The governor found Harold asleep by the hearth in the main room of the house. The young man's slumber had not been disturbed by the servant who had replenished the fire with logs and tidied the hearth. Duwaney stood silent for a full minute, gazing down with compassion at the pale-faced sleeper; but his anxiety to begin operations against the enemy was stronger than his compassion.

"The poor lad looks like nothing but skin and bone," he murmured. "He worked hard, and needs rest and sleep; but for the good of the colony I must disturb him."

So saying, the governor of Bristol's Hope gently prodded the shoulder of the commander of the "Good Fortune" with his

walking stick. The effect of the gentle prod was not at all what the governor had expected. In a flash, and almost before his eyes were open, Coffin was on his feet and had Duwaney by the throat. So they stood for a second. Then Harold became sensible of what he was about and dropped his hand with an exclamation of dismay.

“ ‘Pon my soul! ” cried Duwaney, puffing out his lips and steadying himself against the back of a settle.

“ I beg your pardon, sir. I thought the harbor admirals were upon me,” explained Harold.

“ Enough said, lad,” replied the governor, rubbing his throat with his hand. “ ’Tis a soldierly trait, this springing into action at a touch. Now to business. We must breakfast and then commence operations against the freebooters. You must take your ship ’round and give battle to them outside the harbor. D’ye feel strong enough to engage the three of them? ”

“ Yes, sir. Then I had better breakfast aboard,” replied Coffin.

“ But you need all your men, lad.”

“ No, sir, I think we have enough still aboard to sail the ship and fight the guns. The plantation must not be left short-handed, for you may depend upon it that when we strike at one point they will strike at another. Their hearts are set on breaking this colony.”

Just then there came a loud clatter upon the outer door of the house and, without waiting for an invitation, one of the men from the guard then on duty rushed into the room.

“ Two more fish ships be a-comin’ up the bay, sir! ” he cried. “ They be flyin’ flags already to them that lays at anchor, an’ they be flaggin’ back to them. An’ the men aboard the brigs be a-shoutin’ an’ a-singin’, sir.”

“ The devil! ” exclaimed Duwaney.

“ Of what size are these vessels? ” asked Harold.

“ Luggers, master. Smaller nor they brigs, sir, but fine, stout craft for all that,” replied the colonist.

“ We must attack the three at anchor before the luggers are ready to help them,” said Harold.

“ As you think best, lad. You are her commander,” replied the governor, shaking the younger man’s hand with cordial energy.

Harold caught up his sword and pistols, his hat and cloak, and hurried from the house. He saw MacAllister and a dozen of the men running up to the ridge of the little cape, and others were issuing from the buildings around with their great muskets on their shoulders. The sun was shining high in a clear sky and a pleasant breeze fanned out of the west. Half-way down the narrow path he met old Bill Wing ascending. He stopped him with a gesture.

“ Tell the governor, with my compliments,” said he, “ that a guard should be kept on the water-front here. When the ship moves out the luggers may get past her into the harbor. And the third falconet, that’s in the woods there, should be mounted before the governor’s door.”

“ Aye, aye, captain,” said old Bill, knuckling his cap.

Harold took a small skiff from the foot of one of the drying-stages and rowed himself out to the “ Good Fortune.” Spike was waiting for him.

“ We be in for trouble now,” said the master. “ There be two more o’ these here fish-law pirates a-beatin’ up the bay. It be a well-planned game, sir, ye may lay to that. If they’d all got here yesterday we’d all been done for last night.”

“ We’ll just go out and have a smack at the brigs before the luggers come up,” said Coffin.

“ Well said. It be a sweet wind for pretty sailin’,” cried Spike, immediately bellowing an order to his mate. Men leaped into the shrouds and forward to the capstan. Lusty, bare-legged fellows tailed on to sheets and halyards. Square sails flapped out and were sheeted taut. The anchors were walked up to a roaring chanty and the “ Good Fortune ” moved toward the mouth of the little harbor.

CHAPTER XII

A FRIEND IN NEED

THE brigs were strongly manned but carried only two small cannon apiece. What Spike had to guard against were the grappling-irons and the boarders. He entertained no fear of the result of an open fight, with sea-room to work the ship to the best advantage of her guns. The brigs, warned by the commotion in the harbor, were getting away from their berths with all possible dispatch when the " Good Fortune " rounded the cape. With their anchors just clear of the water and a sail bulging here and there, they were drawing into deep water when the ship's heavy bow-gun, trained on the mark by her commander's own hands, sent a ball low over the taffrail of the " Peep O' Day." It was a chance shot but a deadly one. The man at the brig's tiller reeled and fell, splashed with his own blood; and the little

vessel swung off her course fair before the wind and drove her bow-sprit and complicated, square-rigged jibs crashing and tearing into the starboard fore-rigging of one of her companions. Fouled and helpless, the two drifted slowly out after their more fortunate associate. Their crews worked like mad to clear the one from the other. Close past their impotent, furious struggling sailed the "Good Fortune," steady as a church; and as she swam as smoothly by she hulled the unfortunate "Peep O' Day" with three round-shot. After the third brig she sent her starboard broadside and brought a mass of top hamper swaying and crashing down. And so "Sister Joan," which was that third brig, found herself sorely clipped about the wings at the very commencement of her flight. She showed her displeasure by knocking a hole through one of the "Good Fortune's" jibs; and in return for that she received a discharge of slugs and scrap-iron that dropped two of her men.

The luggers were beating swiftly up to the danger zone; and Spike and Coffin realized

the need of quick action. Coming about with a fine display of seamanship, the " Good Fortune " returned to the crippled brigs and served to each another round of hot iron.

But this time she received some pepper in reply in the form of a chain-shot that cut through her fore-top and brought it sagging down until it tangled in the fore-stays. Now the " Peep O' Day " and the " Plover " were clear of each other and under all sail forged down upon the ship, eager to get alongside and grapple.

The good ship sailed sluggishly now, and was dull in replying to the promptings of her tiller. Two men went aloft to cut away the wreckage but found it no easy matter to clear the tangle. Musket fire opened from the ship and the brigs. The big guns of the " Good Fortune " bellowed and shook. Harold Coffin, smoke-begrimed and happy, called for a hot dish from the galley. It came in an iron basket, carried slung on a capstan-bar between two men — a pie of heated shot glowing white and red. The plums from this pie were served to the approaching brigs

from guns nicely sighted by Coffin himself.

The luggers came along, studied the situation and then rounded the cape and beat up the little harbor. By this time, two of the brigs had fleshed their iron claws in the gunwales of the "Good Fortune." The third, the unfortunate "Sister Joan," lay about twenty yards distant from the ship's bows, dismasted and smoking like an autumn bonfire. Her men were pulling away from her in the boats. The "Peep O' Day" and the "Plover," one on either side of the ship like hounds on the flanks of a stag, seemed to be in a fair state of preservation but in reality were suffering shrewdly in their oaken vitals. The battle along the ship's rails was terrific. Still a great gun roared in thunderous agony, now and then; but the muskets were quiet, the pistols had all spoken and cutlasses and hand-spikes carried on the terrible work.

It was two hours past noon. The "Plover" had cast loose from the ship and

was drifting helplessly into the great bay. Her boats were splintered. The survivors of her crew flung pieces of wreckage overboard and sprang after them into the cold, bright water. The "Peep O' Day" would willingly have loosed her hold on the ship and drifted clear; but for her sins she was held tight in the embrace which she had so eagerly solicited. At last, however, the "Good Fortune" spurned her from her side — pushed her sluggishly away from her own torn side, a battered, blazing wreck full of agony and death.

Tattered and torn aloft and splintered and bleeding below, cluttered with her wreckage and her dead, the "Good Fortune" drew lamely away from the place of her desperate victory. With only twelve living men aboard and only seven still able to haul on a rope or swing a cutlass, full-fed with danger, a very bedfellow with death and disaster, she crawled away from safety and rounded the cape into the little harbor where fresh danger awaited her.

As the "Good Fortune" dragged her bat-

tered hull into the harbor, one of the luggers slipped past her, speeding eastward into the open bay. The ship crawled on, unable to arrest or follow the swift, uninjured little vessel. In the colony the unequal fight still raged; but now it was confined to one or two of the huts. The falconets had been captured, the fish-sheds and stages, the governor's house and the mill on the river were all in flames. The battle was narrowed to a tragic, twisting core. A number of the victorious freebooters had drawn off from the centre of activity, unable to find room among their comrades for the striking of a blow at the remnant of the defenders. At sight of the ship, which they had thought in the hands of their allies long ago, these fellows rushed down to the beach. They massed on the land-wash, ready to check any attempt at landing that might be made by the survivors of the crew. They wanted to wipe out the colony of Bristol's Hope once and forever. Their lugger lay close to the beach, empty. A handful of men waded out and climbed aboard her, with the intention of

sculling her out of the way of any possible danger.

Then the "Good Fortune" spoke again! Two brimming, screaming charges of canister struck and broke and mangled the cluster of men on the shore. A round-shot ripped the lugger between wind and water. Yells of terror and pain arose. The fight in the village opened. Some of the enemy came rushing toward the water and others ran for the woods. The ship grounded lightly and let her anchors go with a splash into shallow water. Then the seven men of her crew who could still swing a cutlass, with Harold Coffin leading, lowered themselves over the side and swam ashore.

Stout fellows stood knee-deep in the tide, ready to repulse Coffin and his six followers. Coffin's head was bandaged. His doublet was gone and his shirt was tattered and blood-stained. His pale eyes flashed like white fire and he shouted shrilly and harshly as he advanced through the shallow water. In his right hand he held a rapier and in his left a dagger, both dripping with brine that

were so soon to drip with a warmer fluid. The big fellow who faced him went down as swiftly as if the wrath of God had found him. A second stumbled, sobbing, from the young man's advance. They gave way sullenly. The cutlasses of the six beat them down and passed on. Coffin, without turning his head to see if his men followed, sped up the narrow path between the rocks. Someone opposed him — but he continued on his way. He found the last combat — the last fragment of the great fight. A dozen fishermen still beat and cut at MacAllister and five of the colonists. He dashed into the *mêlée*, striking furiously with both death-shod hands. A terrific dread burned in him, hurting more searchingly than his wounds and the agony of his panting lungs. He fought like a madman, but still with the fury and skill that made him more dangerous in battle than three men. His six were close behind him. In a minute the day's fighting was over.

“Where is she?” cried Coffin, grasping MacAllister's shoulder.

The Scot swayed, let fall his sword and sank to the ground. He breathed noisily, with his mouth wide open. A trickle of blood veined his left wrist and was dry as powder on the back of his hand. He suffered the extreme agony of exhaustion. He could neither think nor speak.

Coffin leaned against a rough wall of logs and stared down at MacAllister. He had dropped his dagger, his sword hung from his wrist by a thong and both hands were pressed against his aching chest. He moistened his lips with his tongue. "Where is she?" he asked, again.

The other young man made an effort to speak, but could do no more than raise his right hand for a moment.

"Where is she, I say!"

Donald MacAllister struggled dizzily to his feet. His brown, healthy face was the color of chalk. He clutched fumblingly at the other for support. "They carried them away — the governor — and the women," he gasped.

"And Elizabeth?"

“ Yes.”

“ You worthless, big, strutting wind-bag! ” cried Coffin, huskily.

He put out his left hand and pushed MacAllister weakly. The Scot stumbled and fell. Coffin glared down at him, sneering.

“ You had artillery. They had none,” he said, bitterly. “ You had the fortifications — and the hill. You had one to three — enough to hold them off for a year. Why did you let them land? Oh, you miserable fool! ”

MacAllister once more scrambled to his feet. “ We did our best,” he said, hoarsely. “ We fought — you saw how.”

“ Like the beasts of the fields,” returned Coffin.

MacAllister steadied himself with his shoulder against the wall and struck the other across the face with his open hand.

“ D’ye know what that means? ” he asked.

“ I’ll expound you the meaning later — after I’ve caught up to the lugger and brought back the prisoners,” replied Coffin, steadily. He slipped the leather thong from

his wrist, wiped the blade of his sword on his sash and returned it to its scabbard. Then he stooped and picked his dagger from the ground. "MacAllister," said he, "you are as rash as you are vain and stupid. But I am willing to forget that blow, for I have no thirst for blood."

"Be careful, or I may strike you again!" cried the Scot.

"Not now. We must let this disagreement lie until we have recovered the governor and his daughter," replied Harold Coffin.

MacAllister nodded. "Yes, we must get to work again," he said, falteringly. "My head spins with weariness. My bones ache — my sinews are on fire. Yes, we must sail after them. We must call the men — they are working in the woods. Lord, I'd like to lie down and sleep for a year." He reeled against the wall and slid sideways to the ground.

Coffin dragged the unconscious MacAllister into one of the remaining huts. "Lie there, you great weakling," said he. "Your

muscles are too big and your nerves are too small. Your head is full of wood and your belly of clay. Lie there, you poor unfortunate bungler! ”

He held the young Scotchman to blame for the capture of the governor and the women, for the fellow was supposed to be a soldier. With such men and such a position, the place should never have been taken by the crews of the luggers. But his rage against him for his bungling was now half turned to pity. He left MacAllister and collected his six heroic lads and the survivors of the colony. Only four of the men who had taken part in the defence of the plantation could stand on their feet. Six more still had the breath of life in them. The wounded, including MacAllister, were carried down to the beach. Two boats were found adrift in shallow water and in these they pushed across to the “ Good Fortune.” Coffin found Spike on the locker in the cabin, faint from loss of blood.

“ How fares it, Ben? ” he asked, tenderly.

“ Nought but flesh wounds, shipmate,” replied the master.

“ Is the ship hulled? ”

“ She be tight as a pint-pot.”

“ Can she sail? ”

“ ’Twill take a day to get her clear o’ wreckage, lad — an’ even then she’d no more nor crawl.”

“ Then I must set out in a small boat,” said Coffin.

“ Where for? ” asked Spike, lifting his bandaged head.

“ After the lugger. They have carried her away — the governor and the women,” said the commander.

The old man sat up and swore an oath. “ The fools! ” he cried. “ Lad, we must go. We must desert the old ship an’ chase after them.” He waved a great fist; then he sank back on the locker.

“ Lie still, old heart-of-oak,” said the commander, gently. “ With this quest in front, I cannot tarry even to set cup to the lips of my tested and proven comrade.”

He left the cabin and went on deck. He found his servant James and sent him below to revive the master with spirits. Then he

called for volunteers to join him in the chase of the lugger even into the harbor of St. John's, if need be. Every sound man came forward, and many who were not sound crawled to him along the deck. The brave fellows believed that Harold Coffin could suffer neither death nor defeat in action.

“Lads,” said he, “your devotion and courage swell my heart with pride—and ’tis a sore heart, too. But in reason I cannot take more than four of you away from the old ship.”

Then he selected four of the six who had followed him so heroically up to the last slashing of blades in the plantation. A skiff was provisioned. The five dropped into her and the little red sail was hoisted. As they sped into the great bay an angry shouting from the “Good Fortune” reached their ears. It was MacAllister demanding to be taken along with them. The men looked inquiringly at their commander. Harold Coffin shook his head; and the skiff continued to race along on her course.

CHAPTER XIII

WITH THE PRISONERS

GOVERNOR DUWANEY, Elizabeth and the women of Bristol's Hope sat in the waist of the lugger, disconsolate, and huddled close like sheep in a ferry. The governor was in a terrible state of mind, and it was only in consideration of the feelings of his daughter and the other women that he refrained from falling upon his captors and forcing them to kill him. Elizabeth sat beside him on the deck, with her cheek against his shoulder, dry-eyed but white as paper. Some of the women sobbed; some lay in the listless silence of despair. Old Susan March, who had seen her husband cut down before her eyes, sat with her corded, knotty hands clinched in her lap, muttering curses. Sometimes her eyes met the glaring orbs of the governor, and so for a little while they would curse in unison.

The little vessel slid along over easy seas. The rough fellows who manned her were sullen, in spite of the fact that the colony was destroyed and that they themselves were safe away with a valuable cargo of prisoners. These prisoners were worth two thousand pounds to them if a penny. Their plan was to take them to a little, hidden cove with which they were familiar, there to keep them until Duwaney's blood was sufficiently cool to permit of his penning an order on St. John's or Guy's Colony for the desired sum. Then would the honest sons of toil cash the order, after which they would feel free to liberate the prisoners somewhere within a day's march of a convenient plantation. But they were sullen. They had seen the burning brigs and shattered lugger of their friends, and many a sinewy messmate lying stiff. Also, to tell the truth, the sobs of the women and the white, terrified face of the governor's daughter touched them unpleasantly deep down in their bully hearts. They were of the West Country — and so were these sobbing women, and this pale young

lady. Sacred was the fish-trade and sacred were the rights of the Devon fishermen in the Newfoundland, and detestable were all plantations and all colonies in the foggy island; but these women were painfully like other women far away beyond the rocking seas.

The men of the lugger were crowded forward and aft. The skipper, unable to contain his discomfiture at the distress of the women any longer, spoke down to the bedraggled, muttering Duwaney. "Hey, you Governor Rum-and-water," he hailed, "tell the poor lasses as how no harm be a-comin' to they. Tell 'em as how we'll land 'em all, safe an' sound, as soon as ye sets yer hand to a order for two thousands o' pounds."

"I'll set my hand to a very different sort of order, you black-hearted, murdering pirate," replied Duwaney. "I'll put my pen to an order that'll set you all a-swing by your dirty, treasonous necks. I'll set you flapping in the wind! I'll feed you to the lobsters! You'll dance the devil's horn-pipe, you misguided ruffians!"

“Not so fast, old punch-an'-pap,” retorted the skipper. “In a day or two ye'll talk with yer other jaw. When ye've had nought to drink but water for a while ye'll not feel so close-fisted. What be a few bits o' dirty gold agin the salt tears o' yer daughter an' all them poor women? Tell me that, ye old sinner.”

“Do you talk to me?” cried the governor. “Do I hear you talk of women's tears — you who have fired their homes and slain their lads! By that same word will I see the fear of death upon you yet, as surely as there is a God in heaven. Oh, you miserable fool! Do you not know that the lads who sank your brigs and killed your beastly comrades will soon be at your heels? Mark my words, you ruffians — Coffin and Spike will be putting the point and edge to you afore you are two days older.”

“Easy does it. Ye'll be rilin' my bilge if ye don't mind yer tongue, old sherry cask,” returned the skipper. His men grumbled uneasily, staring down at the governor and the women with something not unlike

shame in their eyes. "Them be almighty discomfortable names — Coffin an' Spike," said one.

"Aye, there'll be no good come o' this draggin' the poor lasses and the old women about, sure's blood's red," muttered another.

The skipper turned and silenced the grumblers with a sneer and a curse.

The governor felt easier in his temper, if not in his mind, after his argument with the skipper. Withdrawing his attention from his captors he spoke quietly to his fellow-sufferers, assuring them that he intended to do everything in his power to save them from further misfortune. Some of the women stilled their sobbing; but old Susan March, who had neither moaned nor shed a tear, fixed her bright old eyes on the governor.

"It be a late day now to save us, sir — now that the lads be dead an' the roofs fallen in," said she. "An' for why be they dead? Didn't they fight like heroes, the poor lads? Aye, old an' young, straight an' crooked,

they plied the steel like men. Not for lack o' courage nor lack o' strength be they dead an' bleedin' now, but for lack o' fit men to head 'em, poor dears. To ye an' MacAllister did they look for guidance — to a bumble-brained marchant an' a struttin' young cock who has no more knowledge o' soldierin' than me o' sailin' ships. A fool could see it, sir — aye, or an old woman. Ye did not keep the lads together. Ye called 'em away from the rocks an' crowded 'em into the houses. Ye lost the cannons — an' then, when they was pointin' fair at us, ye sent the lads out to win 'em back. Lord! Lord! An' ye with a sword at yer side an' not enough wit to beat off a pacel o' fishermen! I tell 'e, sir, if Master Coffin had bin ashore ye'd be settin' snug in yer own house this very minute — an' my man — aye, ye fat hound, ye may well hang yer head! "

Yes, Master Thomas Duwaney, governor of Bristol's Hope and a one-time alderman of the great town of Bristol, had his chin on his chest, beyond a shadow of doubt. Furthermore, his fat hands were pressed to his fat

face in a vain attempt to conceal his tears.

At this extraordinary and pitiful sight of the governor so utterly broken in spirit, all the women became silent and motionless. The men of the lugger, who had not caught the import of the old woman's low-spoken words, did not see that anything unusual had taken place among the captives. Elizabeth, without so much as a glance at the old woman, tried to comfort her father. Now there was color in her cheeks again. She patted the poor gentleman's quaking shoulder, murmured words of comfort in his ear and touched her lips to his forehead. At last Duwaney lowered his hands from his wet and twisted face and clutched the hands of the girl; but it was at old Susan March that he looked. "Susan, you speak truth — God forgive me! I was not fit to have charge of those fine lads."

But the old woman did not reply. She, too, was crying at last.

The lugger held steadily eastward. The sun went down and night flooded over the

great bay, and still she fled on the wind. The skipper tried to rouse the governor again, but found him unresponsive. Blankets and tarpaulins were spread over the captives. Elizabeth slept, with her head on her father's shoulder and his right arm around her. The governor did not sleep, but sat with his back against the cold timber of the bulwarks and stared blindly into the shadowy night. The lugger showed no light, but slipped along the dim coast like the shadow of a bird upon the water.

The hours crawled by, and no minute of them found the governor nodding. Wide-eyed, motionless and humble, he kept watch in the crowded waist of the lugger. His poor foot ached and burned; but so severe was his mental suffering that he gave no heed to the physical. He was cold and sore in every bone and fibre. A cut in his left shoulder, awkwardly bandaged, had benumbed the arm from wrist to collar-bone. His other side was stiff from the constrained position that it had maintained for so many weary hours.

But in the bitterness of his soul he felt nothing of all this. Again he lived through those humiliating, frenzied scenes of defeat; again he saw the futility of his and MacAllister's untrained efforts to withstand the attack; again he saw the strong position lost, the brave men sacrificed, the blunders committed. Coffin and Spike had won a victory against appalling odds, whereas he had suffered defeat with the odds heavily in his favor. Never before in all his long career had his pride been laid so low. Having lacerated his soul with a pitiless review of the past day's work, he at last began to grope forward in a half-hearted search for some means of making a partial recovery of his people's fortunes. Neither money nor the best will in the world can resurrect the dead; but burned houses can be rebuilt with new timber. Thanks to Coffin's and Spike's valor and skill, the snug harbor was still in the hands of the Company. In this respect, at least, the victory of the fishermen had proved a fruitless one. First of all, Duwaney decided to write the order for two thousand

pounds at an early hour of the next day and so secure the women from further suffering, as far as was in his power. But he sorely begrudged that good money to the robbers, for two thousands of pounds would go far toward re-establishing the plantation. Perhaps daylight would disclose some pleasanter and cheaper way of settling with the ruffians. Great was the old man's faith in Harold Coffin since his glimpse of the burning, shattered brigs; and he would have felt no surprise if Coffin had suddenly stepped aboard the lugger, miraculously out of the shadowed waters, and smitten the crew to submission single-handed.

At last dawn broke gray over the gray sea. The lugger was out of the Bay of Conception, rounding the southern cape. Elizabeth awoke and sat upright. The governor groaned and slipped sideways to the dew-wet deck, in a swoon; and at the same moment, in the growing light, a large vessel was seen about a mile to seaward of the lugger, heading northward under easy sail. The sight of this ship caused such uneasiness

in the hearts of the skipper and crew that only Elizabeth and the women gave heed to the governor's trouble. The girl chafed her father's cold, limp hands between her own chilled palms. Old Susan March screamed to the skipper to bring rum quickly or he would lose his prize. The fellow cast a hurried glance at the prostrate governor and again turned his gaze to the seaward ship; but, realizing the truth of the old dame's words, he sent a man into the waist with a flask of rum.

And now action was swift, like a fine, stamping scene on a play-house stage. The ship altered her course and drew in upon the lugger. In silent reply, the lugger shook out a reef. The ship crowded down upon her, as if determined to force her ashore, and let fly with her bow-chaser. The shot skipped twice on the water and vanished in a spurt of white spray. One of the women screamed; and the governor, having admitted about a gill of rum between his teeth, coughed violently and opened his eyes.

"Lord! my poor foot!" he cried. Clutch-

ing Elizabeth with his uninjured arm, he sat bolt upright and glared around him. His eyes fixed immediately upon the ship with the plume of white smoke thinning at her bows. "Mark you, 'tis the 'Good Fortune,' " he cried. "Coffin has come to our rescue! Did I not tell you so?" In his excitement he tried to get to his feet; but his cramped limbs would neither lift nor support him.

The skipper headed the lugger for a narrow break in the low cliffs and sneered sardonically at Duwaney. "What, the 'Good Fortune!' " he exclaimed. "Nay, nay, my rare old rum-butt. Ye be out o' the pan an' into the fire now, for certain. Yonder craft be's a pirate ship as sure as ye'll smell brimstone in hell."

Duwaney's heart sank at that and the lightings of triumph faded from his protuberant eyes. "But what are you about, you flea-bit, mangy knave?" he cried. "Would you drown us all in the surf, you benighted son of a hook-an'-liner! Have a care where you steer to, for the love of Heaven!"

“ Ye’ll not drown, I promise ye, ye foul-mouthed old bag o’ malt,” replied the other, viciously. “ I bain’t such a fool, quite, as to spill two thousands o’ golden canaries into the surf. If death overtakes ye, old rum-an’-water, ’twill be high an’ dry ashore, I do assure ’e. If ye die to-day, ’twill be of a slit gizzard more like nor a paunch-full o’ salt water.”

The governor’s bravado evaporated in two winks. “ Save us all from the pirates and there’ll be another thousand on the order,” he begged. The skipper nodded. The lugger sped on toward the narrow, spray-hedged portal in the rocky ramparts of the coast. Already the ship had come abreast of her and two boats were being lowered away. Then a strange, sweet conviction awoke suddenly, full-flamed, in Elizabeth’s heart. She crouched upon her knees, slipped her arms around her father’s neck and set her lips close to his ear.

“ It is not a pirate ship,” she whispered. “ It is the ‘ Jaguar ’ — Captain Percy’s ship — I know. We are saved, dear, as

surely as if it were the 'Good Fortune.' Thank God! Thank God for sending him! "

The governor had heard the story of Percy's visit aboard the "Good Fortune." He had said some bitter things, at the time, in reference to masterless men and erring captains in general and John Percy in particular; but now, at the name, he looked across the water with hope mightily renewed in his breast. "My prayers have been heard," he murmured. Perhaps so. Who knows? The girl, however, gazed at him in open amazement even in that time of stress, for though she had frequently heard the name of the Creator on her father's lips it had never been in the form or manner of prayer.

The lugger flew between the spouting rocks and into the haven of a little cove. At the back of the cove the cliff was broken and tumbled seaward, and devious rock-encumbered passages led upward at a sharp slant to the edge of a brown barren. Down came the great sail; oars were thrust overside and

strong arms seized the prisoners and dragged them to their feet. Then the lugger, with much bumping, grinding and quaking, settled a full quarter of her length on the gradual land-wash.

CHAPTER XIV

CAPTAIN PERCY TO THE RESCUE

Now the morning sunshine was gilding the tops of the rocks that hemmed in the little cove. The edge of the barren above the broken cliff was warm and aglow. The round of sky overhead was blue as a noon-day shadow on March snow. Though the surf spouted and thundered at the rocky portals the little waves broke softly along the shingle within. Nature was at peace in this corner of her vast dominions — but not so the sons of men.

All was confusion and strenuous effort aboard the beached lugger. Some of the men caught up cutlasses, muskets and ammunition, leaped ashore, ran across the narrow shingle and began the steep and twisting ascent to the barren. Others seized roughly upon the women and the governor, lifted them overside and dragged them through the

shallow water. One of the women uttered a scream so shrill and strong that the echoes of it rang back and forth, from rock to rock, with so terrific a note that a dozen gulls dashed from their retreats in the cliffs and beat out of the cove or circled high above it. The offending woman was gagged in a second; and a burly fellow hoisted her to his shoulder as if she were a bag of meal and started up the difficult path without more ado.

The skipper and another brought Duwaney wallowing and spluttering to the beach like a wounded walrus. One can imagine the effect of such treatment on a fat, aching, hot-tempered man with a gouty foot. The ex-alderman of Bristol was fighting-mad, blind-mad. He roared like a monarch of the polar ice, reeled against the skipper, knocked him flat and beat him on the bearded face with his fat fists. His rage was so reckless and the pain in his foot so agonizing that he was past caring (for the moment) whether he was killed or set free so long as he did some damage to his captors. His movements

were like those of a bear, heavy but swift. He snatched a dirk from the belt of the prostrate skipper, flung himself around upon the man who had hold of his collar and sent that astonished individual to glory with five inches of steel between his ribs. He bellowed a challenge, squatting and glaring around him; but now the beach was empty of both captors and captives. One fellow turned, half-way up the boulder-strewn slope, and discharged a pistol at the old man. But the bullet flew wide. The skipper suddenly rolled over, scrambled to his feet and fled upon the way his men had gone. Duwaney hurled the dirk after him; but it fell short and clattered harmlessly on the stones.

At that moment one of the boats from the ship appeared at the entrance of the cove, between the spume-flinging jaws of rock, weighted to the gunwales with armed men. The eight long oars bent, flashed and bent again, and the boat raced in between the hissing white and green. Then the second boat appeared. Duwaney stood up for one dizzy moment, waved his right hand, staggered

and fell unconscious. His recent activities had opened the wound in his left shoulder, and for the past five minutes his blood had been escaping freely, all unheeded.

Captain Percy was first ashore; but his men were close at his heels. He paused, for a second, above the unconscious governor. "I do believe 'tis old Duwaney, of Bristol's Hope," he murmured. Then he turned to one of his lads and told him to see to the old gentleman's hurts. He stepped across the body of the fellow whom Duwaney had killed, with no more than a downward glance, and ran across the beach and up the slope that led to the barren. All his men followed hard save the lad who was busy with binding the governor's shoulder. The second boat touched the beach and disgorged its eager crew; and these too went hot-foot on the trail of the fugitive kidnappers.

By this time Elizabeth had ceased her frantic efforts to fling herself from the arms of her carrier. A great ill-smelling blanket over her head had stifled her screams; and now she neither cried out nor struggled. The

first panic had spent itself and now she was alert and clear-headed. She did not doubt that the ship that had changed its course and given chase to the lugger was the "Jaguar;" and her heart told her that John Percy was not the man to turn aside from a pursuit to which he had once set his feet. She had seen the boats lowered from the ships and knew that the rescuers must now be hot on the trail of the kidnappers. The fellow who carried her held her doubled over his right shoulder, face downward. He had begun to run as soon as the desperate scramble up the broken cliff had been accomplished; and still he ran, though heavily. Sometimes he stumbled, jolting Elizabeth painfully. Even through the blanket she could hear his gruff voice raised in curses at her weight. She was no wisp of womankind, 'tis true; but no man in a decent frame of mind would have grumbled at the burden. Now his feet rang on rocky hummocks and now they squashed through marshy levels. At last he halted, stood for a few seconds swaying and gasping, then slid the girl to the ground,

seized her again and hoisted her to his other shoulder. As he stumbled forward again a musket-shot rang out. This sent him along at an astonishing and dangerous pace. Other shots boomed and banged in the rear, the reports thumping dully upon Elizabeth's muffled ears. The fellow tripped and stumbled to his knees, and loosed his clutch on his prisoner. Her feet touched the ground. Quick as a flash, she hurled all her weight against the kneeling, unbalanced kidnapper. Breathless and surprised, he toppled sideways between two granite boulders. The girl threw the blanket from her, glanced around and then began to run at top speed in the direction of the firing.

The scene was strange and thrilling — at once inspiring and appalling, full of life and marred by death. On one hand lay the blue, sun-shimmering spaces of the sea and on the other the smoky ramparts of distant hills. Overhead curved the flawless sky of spring-time and the north; and around spread the treeless barren, warm-brown and tenderly green over the moist levels and gray and pink

on the knolls of granite. Here were men running, with burdens in their arms; and here were men pursuing. There a fugitive had turned and discharged his pistols and was now dragging a struggling woman forward again. And here was Elizabeth Duwaney running with swirling skirts and flashing ankles, bare-headed and dishevelled — and close behind her the man from whom she had escaped, clutching at her flying garments. But the rogue's hairy paw did not gain a grip — for Captain Percy, appearing suddenly on the top of a hummock on the left and catching sight of the race, discharged a pistolet with such amazing success that the pursuer pitched forward like a shot rabbit. His head struck one of the girl's heels and she, too, pitched violently to the ground.

Elizabeth lay still, uninjured but breathless and desperately shaken. Percy, thinking that the fellow had struck her with a knife at the very moment that the bullet had collapsed him, uttered a cry of consternation and ran swiftly to where she lay. He dropped his sword and pistol, knelt and ten-

derly raised her head upon his arm, thus disclosing her fair face to his anxious scrutiny. Their glances met and held. Messages of light, wonderfully clear and intimate, passed between them in that magic time of silence and communion.

“Thank God!” breathed John Percy, at last.

The girl’s eyes turned from his and her pale cheeks and brow flamed red. A faint sigh escaped her.

“Heavens! are you hurt?” cried Percy.

“No. No, I am not hurt,” she replied, unsteadily. “But my poor father! Where is he? I fear—I fear I forgot him—for the moment.”

“He is safe, I assure you,” replied Captain Percy, tenderly. “He is on the beach, with nothing ailing him, I think, but a cut in the shoulder. Do not move, I pray you. You are weak—and your father is being cared for.”

She let her head sink back again upon his arm. “And the others? Are they safe?” she whispered.

“ My lads are seeing to that, even now,” replied Percy.

Elizabeth sat up, remained so for a little while and then got slowly to her feet. She felt shaken and sore in every bone but strangely light of heart. The man arose, too, and stood very close to her, eying her anxiously and with a tender air of protection and homage. “ You are weak,” he said. “ You must be careful not to exert yourself just now. Let me support you, Mistress Duwaney.”

She looked at him and smiled. She swayed a little with weariness. For a moment he hesitated; then, swiftly and tenderly, he put his arm about her round and slender young waist and drew her against his shoulder.

“ You were about to fall in a swoon,” he stammered. And then, “ On the very instant that I sighted the lugger a voice cried within me that you were in danger,” he added, hastily.

The girl's heart was in a delicious turmoil by now. She wondered if he could feel her body shaking with the mad, uncontrollable

pulsing of it. Her cheeks were aglow and her breath seemed to catch in her throat.

Percy felt her tremble against him and in wonder and concern saw her lift her hands to her face.

“You are cold,” he exclaimed. “We must have a fire. No, we must hasten aboard the ship, where you can get warmth and food.”

“Please take me to my father,” she said. “He was wounded yesterday and suffered dreadfully throughout the night. He needs me.”

So they moved toward the top of the broken cliff that led down to the cove, walking very slowly, the young lady still supported by the captain’s arm. His silver-mounted pistolet and proven rapier lay where he had dropped them, forgotten. This was the first and only field on which Captain John Percy had ever left his weapons behind him.

At the top of the steep and rugged slope the two halted, and the girl moved a step from Percy’s side. They saw Duwaney on

the beach, sitting facing them with his back against a rock. He waved a limp hand to them; and Elizabeth waved back to him. Then she turned to her companion, her beautiful eyes shaded from his glance by drooping lids.

“How can we ever thank you?” she said — “and the merciful God who willed it that you should happen to be on this coast.”

“Aye, God be thanked,” replied Percy, “that I was in time to be of service. But ’twas not chance that brought me to this coast. In St. John’s a whisper reached me that the fishermen had planned an attack upon Bristol’s Hope. My information was not exact, and so I was a day too late to save the plantation; but I thank God that the lugger did not pass me in the night.”

“It was but a lugger, after all,” said Elizabeth. “A common craft in these waters, I should think. How came you to suspect it of — of having anything to do with the attack on the settlement?”

“At the first sight of her,” replied Percy, “a terrifying thought flashed to my mind

that I was too late — that you were already in danger. I turned my glass upon her and saw the waist crowded with women. Then I knew all as surely as if it had been spoken into my ear.”

The girl was silent for a moment. She raised her glance to his and he saw gratitude, tears and a tender radiance in her eyes.

“By God!” he cried, impulsively, “I would give my life and my ship for you.”

The girl turned away from him, very, very slowly, as if vastly against her wish. “See my poor father,” she murmured. “He is still waving his arm like a flail. He will catch his death, I fear, sitting on those chilly stones.”

With Percy’s assistance, she made her way down the rough path to the beach; but as soon as her feet were on the level she ran forward and sank on her knees beside the governor. She bent and kissed him; and then, raising her face, she caught sight of the dead fisherman sprawled close at hand.

“Did you fight, dear? Are you wounded?” she asked, anxiously.

“Nay, lass, I got no fresh wound. But I fought! Oh, yes, I fought,” replied the governor, with spirit. “Two to one, it was — and there lies one o’ the rascals, an’ t’other shammed dead for a little while an’ then scrambled up an’ ran as if the devil was after him. Your old dad has the stuff o’ a first-class fighting-man in him.” Then he groaned. “But he has proved himself a poor general,” he added, dolefully, and he stared unseeingly at his daughter and groaned again.

John Percy stood before the two, silent, observant, hat in hand. At last, catching the governor’s glance, he ventured to speak, though he did not feel entirely at his ease in Thomas Duwaney’s presence and with the young lady for audience. He had heard, more than once, of the old ex-merchant’s narrow-minded worship of everything, good or bad, that was legally established, from a king to a parish bylaw, and of his corresponding distrust of everything irregular, masterless or lawless. Though he despised these pettinesses in the substantial ex-alder-

man with true Percy disdain, he was anxious now to impress the old man favorably.

“ I trust, sir, that I find you but little the worse for your misadventure,” he said, bowing.

“ Alive, sir, alive. I can say no more,” returned the governor, ungraciously. It irritated him to see this lawless captain, this exiled, piratical son of supercilious earls bending his back and sweeping his hat to him. Had this Percy so accosted him in England, law-abiding and on his own heath, then should the worthy governor’s sensations have been of the most lively satisfaction; but here, and now, and a traitor with a halter awaiting his neck — ah, it was a different matter. And now that the consequential old fellow was safe out of the hands of the kidnappers his humility was evaporating like mist before the sun.

“ My dear,” said Elizabeth, “ Captain Percy can see for himself that you are alive — and but for his timely arrival and assistance you might be dead.”

“ Tut! Tut!” retorted the governor, pain-

fully altering the position of his lame foot. "There was no talk of death, my dear girl. The rascals meant nothing more serious than robbery — yes, and a stroke at my political power. But they'd never have dared to kill me — *me*, Thomas Duwaney!"

"And yet, dear, they killed many a brave lad of the colony," said Elizabeth. "In your relief at having me and the poor women safely returned to your care, you forget the danger we all were in so short a time ago. Indeed, I can say without exaggeration, that I owe my life at least to Captain Percy."

Duwaney grunted. Girls get queer notions in their heads. He turned a distrustful glance upon the captain. "I believe, sir, that your name is Percy," he said.

"John Percy, at your service," replied the other, with all the warmth and diffidence gone from his voice. The girl glanced at him apprehensively, appealingly.

"Well, sir, you have saved me two thousand pounds by your providential and timely arrival on the scene," said the governor, "and if you will return us all to Bristol's

Hope I will repay you for your trouble. I am even willing to give you a full half of the sum you have saved to me — one thousand fat canary birds.”

Percy’s face flushed darkly and he stared down at the governor with so fixed and stern a glance that, for all his insolence of improving condition, the old man felt misgivings and began to fidget and lose color. If the flashings of an eye could singe hair, then should Master Duwaney’s scalp most assuredly have twisted and smoked.

“ You make a mistake, my good sir,” said Percy, at last. “ You are pleased to blunder seriously. Perhaps you have not caught my name aright? It is Percy — John Percy — of the Northumberland family. You have heard of the people, I suppose. And let me tell you this — if it were not for this young lady I’d pick you up and pitch you into the sea for your impudence. For her sake I swallow your insults.”

The governor gasped; but he had no appropriate reply to make. What was the man raving about? he wondered. He had done

nothing to him but offer him a thousand pounds. And to hear him rant and rave! Lord! he must be a fool as well as a knave. And yet here he was firm in his hands — and his daughter and the women, too. As was natural with the worthy man, the case of Elizabeth and the women had come to him as an afterthought.

Elizabeth stood up and looked at Captain Percy. She even bent toward him and laid her hand on his arm. “You must forgive him,” she said, gently. “He is suffering terribly in mind and body and does not know what he is saying. Think of his loss — of the ruined colony and dead men — and forgive him his mad words. Forgive him — please — for my sake.”

Percy turned his eyes from the governor to the girl. All the scorn and hot indignation went out of his face and adoration, and something like shame, shone in their stead.

“It is for you to forgive me — for my vile temper. It is for you to be merciful,” he said.

CHAPTER XV

ON BOARD THE “ JAGUAR ”

Duwaney, Elizabeth and the women of Bristol's Hope, were given the best of everything aboard the “ Jaguar ” — the best quarters, food, drink and care. The ruffians who had attempted to carry them off were left in the wilderness, free to find their own way out of the difficulties into which their greed and lawlessness had led them. A few, who had resisted the lads from the ship, lay as quiet and stiff as the fellow whom Duwaney had knifed in his brief fit of valor; but the majority of them, scattered here and there behind hummock and boulder, were suffering from nothing more serious than anger and chagrin when the “ Jaguar ” turned again to her northward course. Duwaney, had he thought of it in time, would have urged Captain Percy to have every mother's son of them strung up to the yard-

arm by the neck; but it is certain that the captain would have turned a deaf ear to the governor's commands, entreaties and threats in this connection. For the brisk, give-and-take business of soldiering had not hardened so much as a fibre of John Percy's heart. Battles, marches and voyaging had toughened him, of course, and numbed a few tender sensibilities; but as strong as ever was his abhorrence of taking the lives of his fellow-men in any other way than in fair and open fight. Even in the name of justice he had never ordered a hanging. Pirates who had fallen into his grasp red with murder and rapine, fiends in human shape whose very existence tempted the wrath of Heaven, were sent to a higher judge with bullets through their hearts.

Duwaney and his daughter sat in the after-cabin of the "Jaguar." They had eaten of the best the lazaret afforded, and the governor had disposed of a punch which (though he was too vain a man to say so) was the best admixture of liquors, spiced and sugared, he had ever set his lips to. The girl leaned back

against the bulkhead and closed her eyes. Duwaney folded his hands on his stomach, raised his lame foot to a padded locker and sank his fat chin on his fat chest. And then, when skirting the very margin of the delectable country of sleep, a queer thought prodded his mind. He sat up with a grunt.

"Hah!" he exclaimed. "I'd entirely forgotten them."

This brought Elizabeth back from the delicious verge of slumber.

"What is it, dear? What have you forgotten?" she asked.

Her father answered the question in his own way. He thumped on the table with his fist and shouted, "Captain Percy! Hi! Captain Percy!"

Percy appeared immediately — and the girl — leaning against the bulkhead and veiling her eyes again, wondered if he had been waiting at the cabin door.

"Anything wrong, sir? Is your daughter ill?" cried the captain. He did not so much as glance an eye at the governor, but strode

close to the table, leaned half-way across it and gazed anxiously at the girl. This was not what Duwaney had expected; so, in his displeased astonishment, he gaped for a second or two in silence. The girl felt the captain's scrutiny. She tried to keep her face composed, the coloring normal and the closed lids steady. But this proved more than she could do. The warm blood tingled in cheeks and brow, the white lids flickered up and, for a momentous second, her eyes shone upon the captain's from their wonderful, secret depths — shone full into his, lit fathoms deep by the same magic light that illumined his own. Then the white lids veiled them again. But John Percy did not move by so much as an inch or shift his gaze by a hair's breadth. He stood with his hands on the table among the glasses and dishes, his body bent forward, and his eyes fixed upon the girl's face with all his heart and life in them.

“What the devil!” exclaimed the governor, at last. “Rip me! what d’ye mean by it? There’s nothing wrong with the girl. I called you. Take your eyes off her, sir,

an' listen to me. What d'ye mean, sir, by standing there like a field-dog at a partridge? "

Captain Percy sighed, his eyes wavered and his figure relaxed. He turned to Duwaney, his face very red and his mouth twisted in an apologetic smile. "I—I beg your pardon, sir," he stammered. "I was thinking of something else—of the dangers you have gone through, and so on. My nerves are not what they were. Of late, sir, I've been under an extraordinary severe strain."

"I called for you, Captain Percy, to speak of our prisoners," said Duwaney. "Have you disposed of them yet? "

"Our prisoners, Master Duwaney? Oh, you mean the fellows of the lugger," returned the captain.

The governor nodded. "What have you done with them? " he asked.

John Percy had quite recovered himself, by this time. Now he was the self-possessed commander of the "Jaguar"—and that was a very different person from the flus-

tered lover of a few moments before. “ ’Pon my word, Master Duwaney, I don’t catch your meaning,” he said, coolly.

“ I speak King’s English. I ask a simple question,” replied the other.

“ King’s English? ” repeated Percy, with a bland though somewhat crooked smile. “ If you speak King’s English then ’tis no wonder I fail to understand you, for I am an Englishman — not a wild Scot.”

The governor glared and began to breathe heavily through his nose. “ This smacks of treason,” said he. “ Mark you, sir, His Majesty is the Lord’s anointed, and as an officer of the Crown I’ll listen to — to none of your treasonous levity. Again I ask you, young man, in what manner have you disposed of the piratical fellows who attempted my life? ”

“ They were after your purse, not your life,” replied Percy.

“ I ask you a question,” roared Duwaney.

“ Which I have no intention of answering,” returned the other.

A strenuous oath exploded from Duwa-

ney's lips. "D'ye forget who I am?" he cried.

"By no means," said the captain, quietly. "You are Thomas Duwaney, governor of Bristol's Hope. I must call your attention to the fact that I am John Percy, commander of this ship — and that, at the present moment, you are my guest."

For a few seconds the governor maintained a thrilling, high-breathing silence. Then he said, with a fair attempt at self-control, "I knew you to be a rascally pirate; but I did not suspect, until now, that you were in league with the fellows who burned my plantation, slew my men and carried me off for a ransom of money."

The smile flashed away from the captain's lips and eyes and the color dwindled from his cheeks. Before he could set his tongue to a word in reply to the old man's astounding and outrageous accusation, however, Elizabeth sprang to her feet and confronted her father with flashing eyes.

"Oh, for shame," she cried, breathlessly. "You know — you know — that what you

say is untrue. He came to our rescue — and now you heap insult upon his head. He feeds us and sails us homeward in his ship — and you sit at his table and revile him.” She turned to Percy with a little gesture of the hands, as if she begged for mercy. “ Please forgive him,” she whispered. “ He does not realize what he says. Oh, forgive him, I beg of you.”

John Percy caught her hands impulsively in his. “ I understand,” he said. “ He has suffered, and is overwrought. I let it pass. Blithely do I forgive him this — aye, and a thousand times as much — for your sake.”

Elizabeth looked fairly into his eyes for a fraction of a second — and so he felt no need of any worded thanks. Then, gently — it seemed reluctantly — she withdrew her hands from his.

“ What is this? ” exclaimed the governor, his mind diverted from the original subject of insult. “ What do I see? D’ye make love to my daughter, sir, under my very nose! Lord, what’s the world coming to! My daughter cries ‘ shame ’ upon me, treats me

like an imbecile, and then — and then — Rip me, but I'll not put up with it."

"My dear sir," stammered Percy, with every trace of indignation melted from his voice and the tremor of confusion in its place, "I hope that our rough fare and poor liquors have not proved altogether disagreeable to you. My own berth is at your disposal whenever you care to retire. You must be worn out after the anxiety and hardships of yesterday and last night. I promise you, if this wind holds, we'll make Bristol's Hope soon after sunset."

Duwaney's rage had subsided and he knew that he had made a fool of himself. Also, he knew that Percy's righteous indignation had turned to pity — to the kind of pity that strong men feel for dotards and weaklings; but he shrewdly suspected that, but for the captain's interest in Elizabeth, he would have had to answer for his insult. Yes, his blind rage was gone, but a terrible gloom engulfed him, brain and spirit. He pressed his shaking hands to his face for a second, withdrew them and gazed sullenly at his host.

“ I appreciate the obligation under which you have placed me,” he said. “ I spoke rashly, just now, for I am old and of an uncertain temper, and of a nature that cannot stand reverses. Yes, I will accept the offer of your berth, for every ounce of my body cries for rest.”

But Fate was dead against the governor's intention of retiring just then; for at that moment a knock came to the cabin door, and a mariner thrust his head within and announced that a skiff containing Master Coffin and four men of the “ Good Fortune ” was close aboard.

“ The brave soul ! ” cried Elizabeth. “ He followed us — in a skiff — with only four men ! ”

“ I must speak with that young man. He'll have news of the colony. He knows how the fight went — at the last,” exclaimed Duwaney, with tragic eagerness.

Percy excused himself and hurried from the cabin. A line had been thrown from the “ Jaguar's ” bows to the skiff and carried amidships; and by the time Percy had

reached the deck the skiff was alongside and Coffin was climbing over the rail. The commander of the "Good Fortune" had heard of the rescue as soon as he was within hailing distance of the ship. He lowered himself stiffly to the deck and grasped Percy's extended hand. "Thank God you overhauled them," he exclaimed fervently.

"You would have done it if I hadn't," replied the other, generously. "What my friend Harold Coffin goes after he usually gets — whether in a skiff with four men or in the saddle with a squadron of hussars behind him."

Coffin smiled at him wistfully. "Can you tell me what the devil I'd have done, even if I had managed to overhaul them?" he asked, leaning weakly against the bulwarks.

"You would have cut their combs, somehow or other, I'll swear," replied Percy. "But come aft, lad, and let me fix you up. You look fit to drop."

Master Coffin made a sorry figure, and no mistake. His face was the color of bleached bone, his colorless eyes were dim, his shoul-

ders sagged forward and his limbs trembled. Around his head he wore a great, untidy cloth, once white but now stained dark red with blood and black with grime of battle. His clothing was torn and stained and his left boot sodden with blood.

“ Yes, I’m nigh spent. I feel as if I could sleep a year,” he said. “ I’ll come along with you, blithely; but may I order my lads aboard? — they have followed me through the whole game.”

Percy gave orders for the men from the “ Good Fortune ” to be treated to the best and for the skiff to be hauled aboard.

Then he slipped his hand under Harold Coffin’s arm and led him aft toward the cabin. “ The old cock is anxious for a word with you; but I’ll not let him bother you long,” he said. “ He is an inconsiderate old fellow — but the liquor is right there on the table and I’ll pour a glassful into you before he has time to ask you a question.”

Coffin smiled wanly. “ How is Elizabeth? ” he asked.

“ I believe she is none the worse for the

adventure," replied Percy. "But tell me, lad," he continued, nervously, "is — is she free, d'ye know?"

As he spoke he halted at the closed door of the cabin and gazed anxiously and somewhat foolishly at his old comrade-in-arms.

"Free?" queried Coffin, leaning heavily against him and smiling wistfully. "Why, my friend, you freed her yourself, this very day."

"Don't laugh at me," pleaded Percy. "You know what I mean. Is she? — is she heart-free?"

"Blows the wind from that quarter?" returned Harold, pleasantly. "Well, comrade, she is heart-free for all I know to the contrary."

"She makes a hero of you, lad," said the other.

"Aye, a hero," answered Coffin. "That is as much as any woman would care to make of me, I think. Oh, you need entertain no fear of her heroes."

Percy nodded, opened the cabin door and stepped inside with his hand still under Har-

old Coffin's arm. At sight of the pitiful figure made by the "Good Fortune's" commander Elizabeth got swiftly to her feet and the governor uttered a grunt of astonishment and concern.

"I was after them — though I don't think I should ever have caught them," said Harold.

Percy helped him to the locker. "Sit down, lad. Lean back, and never mind talking," he whispered. He reached for a flask on the table and poured some brandy into a glass; but even as he turned with it, Harold Coffin waved a hand feebly, closed his eyes and slid sideways until he lay prone and unconscious on the cushioned locker.

CHAPTER XVI

CAPTAIN PERCY HAS TO FACE A SERIOUS PROPOSITION

THE combined attentions of Elizabeth Duwaney and John Percy soon brought the commander of the "Good Fortune" to his wits again. He sat up, bloodless as a corpse, and brushed his pale hair back from his paler brow. The governor was ready for him.

"Are any alive?" he asked, leaning forward.

"A few," replied Coffin, wearily.

"And the ship, lad?"

"Battered and undermanned, sir — but sound i' the hull."

"And Donald MacAllister?"

"He is alive, and aboard the ship," answered Coffin. Then, "He wanted to come along with me," he added, honestly, "but I thought it better to leave him behind. He

shouted after us. I suppose he is very angry."

"You think Donald's a fool?" queried the governor.

"No, sir. I do not think that of anyone who is honest and courageous. But he has not proved himself of much use as a soldier."

John Percy looked at Elizabeth. "What of this MacAllister?" he whispered.

"A vain young man," she murmured, flashing a shy but reassuring glance into his anxious eyes.

Duwaney was for putting a hundred more questions to Harold Coffin; but the others would not allow it. Percy stooped above the sufferer, gathered him up in his arms as if he were a child and carried him to the berth which, so short a time before, he had put at the governor's disposal. The governor noticed this, but was in no mood to resent it. He was not thinking of himself or his own importance now, but of the broken plantation and the poor lads with whom he had spent the long winter and who were now

nerveless clay. Even his wounded shoulder and lame foot were forgotten.

Percy laid Harold Coffin in his own narrow sleeping-place, tenderly examined, bathed and rebandaged the gash on his head, and discovered and attended to a cut in his left leg, just above the ankle. Then he undressed him and covered him warmly with blankets.

“Do you want some broth now, lad? Or some more brandy?” he asked.

“Not now. I want to sleep. I want to sleep for a year,” replied the forlorn hero, weakly.

Master Duwaney and Elizabeth retired soon after this, too, for they, too, were sorely in need of rest. The berths to which Percy showed them were in no way inferior to that in which Coffin lay and, like it, opened off the commander’s cabin. One belonged to Master Horace Down and the other to Master de Verney. Captain Percy wished his guests refreshing slumber and went on deck.

Percy found his gentlemen, Down and de Verney, and one Timothy Barlow, master of the “Jaguar,” on the poop-deck, deep in

discussion. Upon the appearance of the commander whatever subject they were busy with seemed to suffer a sudden exhaustion.

“How is Coffin?” asked Down. “Heavens, but he looked his name all right when he came aboard.”

“He is asleep,” replied Percy, glancing around at sea and shore, up at the sails and then at the faces of his three officers.

“That gentleman must have ten lives inside him, sir, like a cat,” remarked Barlow, “for if ever I see a man look like a corp who wasn’t, ’twas him when he crawled over the side. Blood an’ powder-stain from head to foot, he were, as sure as we sail salt water. An’ he left his footprints on the deck in red blood.”

“Will he die, d’ye think?” asked de Verney.

“Not he, thank God,” returned Percy. “He has a giant’s life—not the lives of nine cats—in that miserable little body of his. Had I a shipload like Harold Coffin I’d not be afraid to sail up the Thames and let fly a broadside at the Tower of London.

I'd put Raleigh's murderers to the block and an English king on the throne."

"If this young man is such a wonder, why don't you get him to join us?" asked Master Down, with an unpleasant sneer in his voice. He was of a jealous disposition, was Master Horace. Captain Percy paid no attention to the question. In fact, he did not hear it. He stood with his elbows on the taffrail and his eyes fixed unseeingly on the lively bubbling of the ship's wake, deep in thought. He had spoken of revenging Raleigh's death — an old cry with him — and even now he saw his life, and even the trend of his ambition, changing, and recklessness and bitterness slipping away from him. It all lay with the girl in the cabin beneath his feet. Had he read love in her eyes? — then, if that were so, the voyaging and fighting of the "Jaguar" were drawing to an end, as far as he was concerned. He was aroused by de Verney touching him on the shoulder.

"I suppose we'll be done with these waters as soon as we return the colonists to their harbor?" he said.

“What do you hold against these waters? Why are you in such haste to get away from them?” asked the captain. “We have struck some shrewd blows hereabouts to keep the memory of Raleigh’s valor awake in the world.”

“But we cannot live by engaging war-ships, chasing pirates with nothing but stolen cod-fish in their holds and taking a few pounds of provisions, now and then, from these beggarly traders,” replied de Verney. “This is a dangerous game we play—and so the stakes should be worth the risk. There are fat rewards awaiting our valor in the south, John—our old-time enemies, heavy with gold, and all manner of murdering gentry ripe to be relieved of their ill-got cargoes and strung up by their necks in just punishment for the honest blood they have spilled. And if you want us to fight a king’s ship occasionally for glory rather than profit and to keep the knowledge of our anger alive, we’ll find more of them among the Caribbees and up and down the main than in these fishy waters.”

John Percy looked troubled and displeased. "Greed! Greed!" he exclaimed. "I do believe that you three would have had me accept old Duwaney's offer of a thousand pounds for our services of to-day."

"Did he offer a thousand pounds?" asked Down.

Percy nodded. "One half of the sum for which the fishermen intended to hold him and the women," he remarked.

"The impudent old tallow-chandler," exclaimed Master Down, indignantly.

"So I told him," said Percy.

"And rightly, too," cried de Verney. "'Pon my soul, I'd have pinked him for it."

Timothy Barlow, the shipmaster, smiled. "An' yet, my masters, he but offered fair wages for fair service. We did him a good turn, an' he was willin' to pay the captain for it. I be but a common man — a plain, tarry-pawed Jack — but to me it looks like as honestly earned a thousand o' canary birds as any we've touched since we took to free voyagin'."

"What!" cried Percy. "Would you

have had me accept payment for rescuing a young lady from distress? Stop me, man, but you must think I've fallen devilish low!"

"Think nought o' the kind, sir!" exclaimed Barlow. "Low, do ye say? If such was in my mind, mark ye, Tim Barlow would sail with ye no more. But I hold, sir, that in these poor times an' in these waters where we finds more glory nor pickin's, 'twas a thousand pound cleanly an' easily earned. But I may be wrong—for I be nought but a common son o' a sea-cook, baptized with bilge-water an' brung up at a rope's end, an' I make no pretence to all the foolish whims o' folks gentle-born. All I say is, the lads for'ard would ha' been desperate glad for their share o' them yellow canary birds, for they be sick with longin' for prize money."

"So! It seems to me they have not done badly," said Percy, reflectively.

Down turned to the shipmaster. "Timothy," said he, "I'll make the matter of the thousand pounds clear to you in half a min-

ute — as clear as if you saw it with the captain's own eyes. Here's a young lady — the daughter of this Duwaney! We three had the pleasure of meeting her aboard the 'Good Fortune,' not a great while ago. Fine looking? Beautiful? Spirited? By 'r Lordy, man, she struck us all dumb as shell-fish with a glimpse of her eyes! You have that, Tim? Well, lad, the captain here, with some help from us, saves her (and, incidentally, her father and a crowd of squealing women) from a crew of kidnappers. Then the old dog offers him money for it, — for saving the lady. He refuses. What do you make of it? "

"Why, sir, that the captain done right. I'd do the same myself was I in love with such a fine young lady," responded Barlow, heartily.

Percy flushed and turned hotly upon them. "Have a care! Mind your tongues, both of you!" he exclaimed. Horace Down bit his under lip in vexation at being thus cavalierly addressed before the shipmaster and the lad at the tiller, and honest Tim Barlow grinned.

Percy began to pace the narrow deck, from rail to rail, the three officers and the helmsman watching him covertly. Presently he halted in front of Barlow.

“ So the lads are beginning to fidget, are they? ” he asked.

“ Aye, sir,” replied Timothy. “ They wants to haul alongside a Spaniard or a Spanish-fed pirate again, an’ no mistake.”

“ I have put them in the way of some fat geese to pluck before we began this undertaking,” said Percy.

“ Yes, sir, that ye have — an’ not a soul aboard, gentle or simple, denies the same,” returned the master. “ But we hold that it be a risky way o’ livin’, even under your command, sir, an’ the sooner we make our piles an’ win safe ashore the better. Spain is our enemy; every murderin’ robber and pirate on the high seas is against us, for the damage we’ve done ’em; and the war-ships o’ our own Merry England be on our heels as if we was the devil himself. Aye, and with good cause, too! Whoever catches us, we hang — whether they slip the noose in

the name o' piracy, sheer dislike, revenge or treason. So we feel, sir, that we have no time to waste, but had better do our work quick an' then vanish from the face o' the waters."

Percy turned to the lad at the tiller. "You hear what Master Barlow says, Truxby. Is this the way you feel in the forecastle?"

"Only if agreeable to yer honor, sir," replied Truxby. "But for this matter o' the war-ships, yer honor, we'd feel no uneasiness about sailin' the sea with yer honor for the rest o' our lives, sir. But as things stand, yer honor, an' if it be agreeable to yer lordship, we feel as how we'd like to have a few more cracks at they Spanish treasure-ships an' then go quickly ashore an' settle down afore we be hanged, sir."

"And I don't blame you, Truxby," replied the captain. "That we run a shrewd risk of the halter, every man of us, I'll not deny. We play a game that the world does not understand; and all are against us, high and low. But they cannot hang us until

they catch us, and though many have tried, not one has grappled with us yet. I'll make my plans known in two days."

Percy went down the starboard ladder and entered the cabin. He moved quietly so as not to disturb the sleepers in the narrow berths so near at hand. He filled a long clay pipe with Virginian leaf, sat down at the table and gave himself to thought. That he would not leave these waters unless Elizabeth Duwaney asked him to, or left them herself, he was determined; but as to everything else his plans were in a fog. That he was gloriously and helplessly in love with the daughter of the hot-tempered governor of Bristol's Hope he knew, and every faculty of thought and feeling within him accepted the knowledge. Also, he did not struggle against this wonderful love, though he saw at a glance what mighty changes it was to make in his life, whether it should prove successful or hopeless. But he could not find it in his heart to believe it a hopeless passion. The light that he had seen in the depths of her eyes — surely that had been the tender

radiance of love! If so, he would make every effort to win her. He was guilty of treason against the king, 'tis true, but he considered his honor unstained in this matter, for this treason was honest enmity against a king whom he despised and considered as no better than the murderer of his old commander. He had been born a gentleman; and he had lived as one, according to his lights. Though he had fought in many battles and skirmishes, afloat and ashore, he had never injured a defenceless or wounded man or ill-treated a prisoner. Even of late, after openly proclaiming himself an enemy to his sovereign and a free agent upon the seas, he had confined his operations to such craft as were a menace to commerce and a disgrace to civilization and an occasional fling, just to show his spirit, at an English warship. Indeed, had an accurate account been kept of his work as an erring captain, it would have shown plainly enough that for every honest or harmless person incommoded by him the fangs had been drawn from a dozen murderers and ravishers. So

Captain John Percy looked back over his daring career and decided that he was no more unworthy of the love of a good and beautiful woman than most men. This, he knew, was not a high standard by which to measure his moral worth — the unworthiness of other men — but, as it fell in with his desire, he accepted it gladly and really felt quite a glow of virtue.

He was still occupied with thoughts set astir by his love when Down and de Verney entered the cabin and joined him at the table.

“What’s in the wind?” inquired Down, guardedly. “Why do you hang fire on this matter of running south?”

“One can see with half an eye, that you do not relish the idea of the islands — and yet there is where prizes are big and risks small,” said de Verney.

John Percy looked from one to the other with a somewhat discomfited expression. He leaned close to them. “It’s — it’s the girl,” he whispered.

Down sighed dramatically. “I suppose,

John, you've let her melt your manly heart," said he.

John nodded.

"She has melted mine, too," said de Verney; "but what has that got to do with our southern voyage?"

"I'll not go away from her unless she sends me away," replied Percy, quietly. "I can't run the risk of losing her. And if I *don't* lose her — which God grant — I'm done with taking toll of Spaniards and pirates, — and I'm done with revenge!"

CHAPTER XVII

THE RUINED COLONY

CAPTAIN PERCY'S disclosure of his intentions and the state of his heart astonished his friends — nay, more than that, it filled them with dismay. They glared at him, their eyes wide with amazement and darkling with displeasure.

“ Then what the devil are you going to do? And what the devil are we to do? ” asked Horace Down.

“ Keep your temper, Horace, I am a free man. You are not my guardian,” returned Percy.

“ Yes, you are a free man, John — but with a very handsome price on your head,” said de Verney. “ You'll not feel so free and frisky if some diligent officer of the king gets his fingers on you.”

“ You say truly that I'm not your guardian — and I thank my stars for that! — but

you must allow me to take some interest in your affairs," said Master Down. "We've been in and out of some devilish tight places together, John."

"You are right, lad, and I'm not forgetting our friendship," replied the commander. "My own brothers are no dearer to me than you two, for our blood has run together in more than one rare engagement against odds. But for all that I cannot tell you what I do not surely know myself! 'Pon my soul, you might be more considerate! Can't you give me a few days' grace in which to discover my own position? It may be that the lady cares nothing for me; or again, she may care, but not want to — to have things move too swiftly. Then who is to answer for old Duwaney's attitude towards me? By what I've seen and heard of the old fellow, I believe he'd rather have his daughter marry a Turk than a poor, adventurous gentleman who has had the audacity to openly proclaim his enmity against James, the Lord's anointed. I make a shrewd guess, comrades, that he considers us not a whit better than

a pack of murdering pirates. So how can I name you the course I intend to sail in the future in the wink of an eye? If you love me, comrades, give me a few days in which to work it out."

"But let us suppose that both the lady and old Duwaney are satisfied with your suit. Even then, John, how are you going to support a wife and retire from your present honorable but dangerous occupation at one and the same time?" asked Down.

"I have never been a spendthrift," replied Percy, "and though England and the family possessions are lost to me, I own a snug little place in the most beautiful and retired of all the islands of the Caribbean Sea, and a house and some firm friends in the New England Colonies. So, you see, my shares in this ship and in the treasure in the lazaret are not the whole of my worldly possessions."

"That is all very well — for you," said de Verney. "But it does not help us. If you give up command of this ship, what's to be done? Though I blush to say it, the

lads forward do not put much faith in Horace and me — they don't think us naval or military geniuses. So if you desert your charge, who is to command the ship for long enough to give us a chance to empty the holds of a few more iniquitous traffickers in blood and gold? ”

“ By Heaven! ” exclaimed Percy, impatiently, “ do you think I can read the future? Come, be reasonable! Give me two days in which to discover my own position and then I'll do what I can toward helping you with your plans. Two days! Can't you give me two days? ”

“ Certainly, certainly,” replied de Verney, daunted by the flash in the other's eyes.

“ You ask no more than is reasonable, John,” said Master Down. “ So I promise that you'll not be badgered again by these questions until this time day after to-morrow.”

The wind held, and in time the “ Jaguar ” entered the little harbor of Bristol's Hope and let go her anchor. The stars were shi-

ning, the "Good Fortune" showed light aloft and alow, but ashore, where the plantation had so lately stood, all was darkness. Harold Coffin, clothed sumptuously from the combined wardrobes of Percy, Down and de Verney, and with his head and left leg still in bandages and the pallor of death still on his cheeks, went directly aboard the "Good Fortune" with his four men. Word that the governor and his daughter, and the women of the colony, were safe went from end to end of the battered ship as quick as light; and all of the ship's depleted company and such of the survivors of the settlement as could stir from their berths collected in the waist and cheered the "Jaguar." The men of the other ship, and presently some of the women, cried back to them. The women began to call the names of their own men — and sometimes the cry was answered from the "Good Fortune;" but more often it was followed by a pitiful silence. So the list of the casualties was soon known aboard the "Jaguar;" for the voices of the survivors were heard, and the names of the

wounded men were shouted across the black water by their comrades — and silence spoke the names of the dead.

Harold Coffin and Benjamin Spike stood on the poop-deck, gazing across at the shadowy bulk of the other ship, each occupied with his own gloomy reflections. Both were thinking of the dead sailors and colonists, of the widowed women, of the battered ship and wrecked colony. In the sight of others' sufferings Coffin had dismissed all thought of his own trouble from his mind — yet he knew that the woman he loved was lost to him as inexorably as if he lay dead, along with so many of his brave lads, under the harbor water or among the broken houses.

Old Spike heaved a groan. “ I could weep at thought of it,” said he — “ at thought o’ all they stout lads butchered for nothin’. We suffered cruel, ’tis true; but we won the fight an’ saved the ship. But the poor lads ashore! — Lord, I’d shoot myself for a worthless hound if I was that paunchy governor! ”

“ And yet it is not fair to blame him. He has had no military training,” said Coffin.

“ Then what of MacAllister? He pretends to be a soldier,” retorted Spike.

“ He is brave enough, but has no knack of leadership, I take it, in either attack or defence,” answered Coffin. “ I am sorry for him, Benjamin, for with more experience and a cooler head he'd make a good commander. The lad has the right spirit and the right blood in him, somewhere under the untarred pride and unpricked conceit.”

“ Unpricked? Nay, for the wind is not o' his vanity now,” said Spike.

“ Where is he? ” asked Coffin.

“ He went ashore, fair frothing at the mouth, soon after ye left,” replied the shipmaster. “ He was swearing, he'll have your blood for not taking him along with ye.” He paused and laid a hand on Coffin's shoulder. “ Mark my words, master, this wild Highland gentleman be smitten desperately with love for the young lady — an' so that makes him none the fonder o' ye.”

“How so?” asked Harold. “He has nought to fear from me, Benjamin.”

“An’ why not, comrade?” returned Spike.

The other laughed grimly. “Why not, d’ye ask!” he exclaimed. “Look at me, Benjamin. The light is bad, but ’twill serve. A veritable heart-breaker, am I not? Mark my fine features, glowing cheeks and flashing eyes! Mark my commanding figure! Lord, man, I’m a thing to excite disgust — or maybe pity — in the heart of a dairy maid! A corpse would make as effective a lover.”

Master Spike was silent for a little while. At last he said, haltingly, “But ye be worth the lot o’ us in a skirmish or a battle. Big as I be I’d never match ye in a fight. Mac-Allister, Percy, Duwaney — ye’d eat them all. There be a devil in ye, when blades flash, that no bulk o’ muscle or length o’ arm can withstand.”

“Though you exaggerate, my friend, there is a grain of truth in what you say,” replied Harold, with quiet bitterness in his voice. “I am a remarkable fighting-

machine, 'tis true. And death overlooks me — strikes too high for my ugly head — and the tall men go down. But do the hearts of maids warm and flutter to fighting-machines? Then shall they set their desires on culverins and falconets — which are shapely engines of their kind — rather than on me."

No one went ashore from either of the ships during the night; but, a few hours before dawn, Donald MacAllister returned to the "Good Fortune." The poor fellow was almost mad with grief, anger and wounded pride. All day he had toiled desperately about the ruined plantation, striving to deaden the memories of his humiliating failure. He had dug graves in the woods by the river — grave after grave, toiling with pick and spade in the tough soil until his hands grew raw and his head light as smoke — and carried the dead men in his arms, one by one, and buried them deep. It had proved a bitter and heartrending task, — for he could not blind himself to the fact that, but for his own inefficiency, many of these brave

fellows would still be alive. So he had worked and suffered all day, without a thought of food or drink. Now, in the chill and darkness before dawn, he paced the midships deck of the "Good Fortune," exhausted but restless, dreading the return of daylight. He had seen the "Jaguar" come in and heard of the rescue of the governor and the women; but he was in no mood to feel thankful for anything. An incompetent bungler, he had disgraced his name! What of his pride now, when even the sailors could not hide their contempt for him as a weakling? Well he knew — for it needed no telling! — what Coffin and Spike thought of him. And Elizabeth? What would she make of his ignominious defeat — and of Harold Coffin's victory in the "Good Fortune," against tremendous odds? Even as he had earned disgrace so had Coffin won glory. Lord, it was a bitter draught for his Highland spirit! He thought of how Coffin had gone after the lugger without him, and had refused to turn back for him, and in the inflamed state of his mind this seemed worse than a slap across

the face. His gorge rose at that memory, almost choking him; and he swore he would settle his score with Harold Coffin before the passing of another day.

Dawn lifted in the east and flooded into the harbor from the seaward vastness. Mac-Allister looked around at the gray desolation, felt a sudden weight of weariness oppress both body and spirit, stumbled into the cabin and sank to sleep on one of the lockers. Aboard the "Jaguar" the governor was early astir, and a fearful curiosity drew him out to gaze upon the site of his beloved plantation. He limped across the deck and leaned upon the rail, and for a full minute stared in silence at the charred timbers and broken roofs. At last a mournful cry escaped his purple lips, harsh and dismally prolonged. He swayed on unsteady legs, clutched the rail and glared. Then curses flew from him, childish in their futility but terrible. Men ran to him; but he met them with oaths and strokes of his fists. They closed with him, fearing that he might do

himself an injury, and bore him back to the cabin. They laid him on the floor, and at that moment Percy followed them in from the deck — he had slept in the forecastle — and Elizabeth appeared from her berth, wrapped in a great cloak, her feet bare and her hair streaming upon her shoulders. The men drew back. Percy, reaching the governor first, knelt beside him and raised his head on his arm. Elizabeth knelt on the other side and caught her father's hands.

Duwaney's great face was purple. He breathed thickly, his shaven lips making inward and puffing outward noisily. His eyes were closed at first; but presently he opened them, gazed at the girl and then at Percy. "God forgive me my sins!" he murmured. He rolled his head from side to side on the commander's arm. "My devilish temper — it is my undoing," he whispered. He lay quiet for a moment, staring up at his daughter. "Go home," he gasped, "an' marry — Sir Stephen. It is already planned. My last will — under the hearth-stone."

He flung himself upward into a sitting

position, swayed so for an instant, and then fell heavily back into John Percy's arms. And that was the last of Master Thomas Duwaney in this world!

The shock of her father's death, striking upon nerves already overstrained by fatigue and suffering, prostrated Elizabeth. Percy carried her back to her berth, spoke a few halting words of sympathy — but by the last speech of the governor his tongue was fettered — then went forward and sent one of the women to wait on her. Duwaney's body was carried to the poop-deck, laid out on an improvised bier and covered with a flag, and a guard of two armed marines was set over it. Then Percy crossed to the "Good Fortune" with the startling news, which was received with astonishment and regret by Coffin and Spike — but the regret was not for the death of old Duwaney so much as for Elizabeth's grief. Neither of them had loved the governor or greatly respected him. The spirit of many a better man had been sped within the last two days. While the three spoke together, Donald MacAllister

left his couch and appeared on deck, dishevelled, pallid and red-eyed. Harold Coffin, who had seen him while asleep but had not spoken to him since returning from the pursuit of the lugger, said, "Master Duwaney is dead! He passed away within the half-hour."

MacAllister halted, aghast. "Dead!" he exclaimed. "The governor dead! By the eternal, how is this?"

Percy explained the thing to him minutely. The Scot listened with evident impatience and suspicion.

"Where is the body?" he demanded, when Percy had ceased speaking. "Are there no marks upon it? — no treasonous wounds? I must see it, by Heaven!"

The commander of the "Jaguar" fell back a pace as if he had been struck in the face. Coffin glared angrily at the speaker and even Spike looked astonished and uncomfortable. After a moment of tense silence, John Percy found his voice. "You are young, Master MacAllister, and sorely overwrought," he said, "and so I let your

words pass. But be careful, I beg of you. Guard your tongue, Master MacAllister."

The Scot flushed darkly. "I spoke without any intention of insulting you," he said. He pressed his hand to his forehead. "So Duwaney died — in a fit," he muttered. "I was fond of that old man." He looked at Percy. "What of the young lady? As her father's lieutenant, I consider myself her guardian until such time as she can be returned to her home."

"The young lady is not in good health," replied Percy.

"As to the young lady's guardianship, I believe she is of an age to select her own protector and adviser," remarked Coffin, drily.

MacAllister turned on him and looked him up and down with a scrutiny more galling and insolent than spoken jeers. Harold Coffin stood quiet under it for a few seconds; then, unable to bear it any longer in silence, he said, "Have a care, MacAllister. Don't brew any more trouble, I pray you, for we are already burdened with it."

“Of what am I to have a care?” asked the other.

Coffin sighed, turned on his heel and walked away. Spike touched MacAllister's arm. “Don't bait that poor lad, for God's mercy's sake,” he whispered. “We be too few, Master, an' too sore already, to shape a course for more bloodshed.”

CHAPTER XVIII

MASTER DUWANEY'S WILL IS FOUND

“YES, this little matter can wait,” said Donald MacAllister. “Now I must think of my friends and ignore my enemies.”

“Enemies!” exclaimed Spike in disgust. “Let me tell ye, sir, man to man, ye talk like a witless child.”

“You are all against me,” said MacAllister — “aye, and you were all against the governor, down in your hearts. But he was an honest man and stood to his king — and no damn professional cut-throat.”

Master Spike turned away from the young man, fearing that he might forget his own plea for peace if he remained to hear any more. But at this naming of Harold Coffin as a professional cut-throat his thick blood boiled and his great chest heaved.

MacAllister went aboard the “Jaguar,”

felt a twinge or two of real sorrow at sight of the dead governor, and then sent word to Elizabeth, by the woman who waited upon her, that it was of grave importance that he should see her for a few moments. The girl did not keep him waiting, but entered the cabin, from her narrow berth, the instant she heard his name. Her face was deadly pale and her eyelids red and swollen with weeping. In silence, calmly and without any lightening of expression, she extended her hand to the Scot. He pressed his lips to it passionately; but she seemed utterly unaware of the warmth of his address.

“I have come to tell you how deeply I grieve for you,” he said, “and that — now — I pray you to consider me as your protector until I return you safely to your home. He would have it so, I think, for he trusted me. We were friends — he and I.”

“Yes,” replied the girl, vaguely. “You are kind — and he was fond of you. I am in the hands of my friends. You are all kinder than I deserve.”

This reply disturbed MacAllister. His

jealous nature took alarm. "But it seems to me," he said, "that, as your honored father's assistant — that I have first claim to — to devote myself to your service. He would have it so, I am sure."

She looked at him, for the first time, and there was a gleam of wonder in her eyes. "But — but I have so many friends," she protested, mildly. "You, and Master Coffin, and Master Spike and Captain Percy. All are willing to befriend and protect me, I know. I thank God that I find myself in the care of so many brave gentlemen."

"Master Coffin," said MacAllister, with no inflection in his voice to give meaning to the words.

"Yes, yes," replied Elizabeth, quickly. "He has proved himself a — a noble friend. He is dear as a brother to me."

The young man smiled grimly. "But remember that I, too, am eager and ready to serve you," he said.

The colonists were divided between the two ships, and nothing was done that day toward re-establishing quarters ashore. Im-

mediately after his interview with Elizabeth, MacAllister sent two men around to Guy's Colony to obtain help and advice from Captain Mason, the governor of the older plantation. Bristol's Hope was but an off-shoot of Guy's — a fact which both Duwaney and his lieutenant had ignored in the past but which came to MacAllister's mind now with a sense of relief. Mistrusting the loyalty of Coffin, and knowing that Percy was an outlaw, he suddenly felt the need of both moral and material support from such a man as Captain Mason.

Percy told MacAllister the governor's last words, feeling it his duty to do so as the Scot was now in command of the colony. Poor MacAllister could not conceal the effects of the shock.

“ Sir Stephen,” he whispered, hoarsely. “ Who the devil is he? ”

“ I don't know. 'Tis the first I ever heard of him,” replied Percy, eying the other with mingled pity and scorn. “ But this is not the point,” he continued. “ Duwaney spoke of his will being under the hearth. That

would be under the hearth of his own house, I take it."

"Yes," replied MacAllister. "We must go ashore and look for it."

The governor's house had been ransacked and partially demolished. The main room was filled with timbers from the roof and walls. Through this wreckage Percy, MacAllister and two of the men from the "Jaguar" worked their way. It was a difficult undertaking, and the sun was behind the western hills by the time they reached the great hearth. The stone was a mighty slab of granite fully six feet long and deeply imbedded in clay. A candle was lighted; and by that feeble illumination, hemmed in by great, criss-crossed timbers and fragments of broken roofing, they set to work on the hearth-stone with a pick and two crowbars. A corner of the slab was soon raised from its bed and blocked up. Then MacAllister lay flat and thrust his arm into the cavity beneath the stone. For some time he fumbled about in a breathless silence. Percy bent above him with the candle. The sailors

leaned on their crowbars, eager and puzzled. They had got the idea into their simple minds that the gentlemen were after the dead governor's money — and this was not what they had expected from their commander.

“Here is something,” said MacAllister, at last. He thrust in the other hand and pulled hard. “A box,” he grunted. “But it is stuck fast. Ah! here it comes.”

Then they discovered that the box was too large to pass through the opening, and so they had to set to work again and block the edge of the stone six inches higher. When this was done, and while the Scot was engaged in pulling the box from its hiding-place, the older of the two sailors turned to Captain Percy.

“Axin’ yer pardon, sir,” said he, nervously, “but be ye arter the old man’s — the the old man’s money?”

“You know better than that, lad,” replied Percy, quietly.

“Aye, sir, we *knowed* better; but we was

wonderin'. We was thinkin' o' the young lady, sir," replied the man.

"We are all thinking of her, lad. It is for her we are working now," said Percy, kindly.

By this time, MacAllister had the box out of the hole. It proved to be an important looking casket, about six inches in depth, half that again in width and nearly two feet long. It was of iron, heavily banded, and weighed amazingly for its size.

"A devilish heavy will," remarked MacAllister, straightening his long back and wiping the sweat from his brow with a grimy hand.

Percy stared at the thing for a few seconds in pensive silence. No doubt it contained gold as well as the valuable document; and this thought recalled to his mind the offer the old man had made him of a thousand pounds and the rage with which he had met the offer. He was sorry, now, that he had let his anger flare at the old man; and he wondered uncomfortably if that exhibition of temper had injured him

in the girl's eyes. But what did it matter now, since he had heard of this Sir Stephen?

“ Shall we take it aboard the ‘ Jaguar ’ or the ‘ Good Fortune,’ for the night? ” asked MacAllister. He did not take a high hand with Percy, for though he knew him to be an outlaw he could not forget that he had been one of Raleigh's most trusted officers. And there were other things about this captain that called for courteous treatment — his bearing and appearance and his name. Also, the Scot did not think that he had any personal grievance against this man as he felt sure that he had against Harold Coffin. So his words had contained a note of reserved friendliness.

“ Aboard the ‘ Good Fortune,’ by all means; and I suppose you will bring it over to the lady in the morning,” said Percy.

“ Very well,” returned the other. “ I shall guard it well, you may be sure.”

The mariners made way through the ruins with the precious box and carried it down to the boat. The gentlemen followed.

“ About this Sir Stephen,” remarked the

Scotchman. "Now why should the governor have set his heart on such a thing as that? Does the lady agree, I wonder?"

"That is more than I can say," replied Percy. "I know nothing of — of her affairs. If she loves this Sir Stephen — whoever he is — no doubt she will marry him all in good time." He spoke indifferently.

"He is rich, I suppose," said the other. "But do you know, I do not believe she is — very fond of him. A queer thing for me to say, of course, and especially to you, who do not seem to be interested."

"Oh, yes — I am interested," replied Percy, calmly.

"It seems to me," continued MacAllister, "that her heart is not so far away. Some one nearer —"

"What do you mean?" asked the captain, quickly.

"It is absurd — it sounds ridiculous — but I am afraid that Coffin has played upon her pity," returned MacAllister.

"Ah — Coffin. Perhaps you are right," said Percy. But his heart lightened, for he

knew that if her love was anywhere in Bristol's Hope it was not his poor friend Coffin who held it. And he considered it a hopeful augury that this honest but unobservant youth had seen something to cause him to doubt the girl's devotion to Sir Stephen.

Now the box was in the skiff and the men were waiting to push off. The gentlemen stepped aboard; and so busy was each with his own hopes and thoughts that not another word passed between them that night.

At an early hour of the next morning the box was taken aboard the "Jaguar" and given to Elizabeth. The girl looked at it sadly and without any exhibition of interest.

"I have brought some keys. One of these may open it," said MacAllister. But, to the young man's disgust (for he was determined to let the others see that he considered himself her natural protector), she refused to touch the box until Percy, Coffin and Benjamin Spike were summoned to the scene. They came, greeting her tenderly but with few words. Even old Spike kissed her hand — though it was a saying of his that a

maid's lips were what the Lord had intended men to kiss.

As no key could be found to fit the box, the lock was shattered by a pistol-shot. The smoke cleared, and all drew close to the table.

"I do not want to open it," said Elizabeth, disconsolately. "Please open it for me, Master Spike."

Benjamin, immensely flattered by this mark of special favor, laid his great hands on the casket and had the cover turned back in a moment. A number of plump canvas bags were disclosed to view. At a sign from Elizabeth, Spike removed these one by one and set them down on the table. Each struck the board with a solid, metallic *chunk*. Gold coin, beyond a doubt! Elizabeth did not even glance at the bags. It was her father's will that she waited for with breathless anxiety and a shadow of dread. Well she knew the old man's plans and hopes for her future. There would surely be something in the fatal message to threaten the promises of sweet, new happiness that had

come to her — promises so sweet and strange that even her grief could not entirely deaden her heart to the music of them.

Spike drew a long, flat packet from the box. It was wrapped in parchment and fastened with three seals of red wax. On the face of it was written, "The Last Will and Testament of Master Thomas Duwaney, of Oak House, Bristol, Governor of Bristol's Hope in the Newfoundland."

Spike placed it in the girl's trembling hands. She turned it over and over, staring down at it with tears in her eyes and a grip of fear at her heart. With visible effort she broke the seals and let the enclosed document fall upon the table. Every one eyed the thing apprehensively, for Elizabeth's manner had set all their nerves alert as if for some unknown danger.

"Please read it to us — you, Master Mac-Allister," she whispered. Her agitation was so extreme that she was forced to sink to the locker and lean back against the bulk-head. Percy stepped quickly to her side, pale with concern.

MacAllister began to read, in a voice that was at first husky with nervousness and presently harsh with indignation. Duwaney's very considerable fortune was divided between his son and his daughter, two-thirds of it for the boy and one-third for the girl. There were conditions, however. Elizabeth was to marry Sir Stephen Morris, Baronet, according to an agreement arrived at between Duwaney and Morris on a certain date; but should the girl refuse to marry the baronet of her father's choice, she was to receive nothing more from the estate than a yearly income of one hundred pounds. Sir Stephen Morris, of Bristol, and Captain John Mason, of Guy's Colony, were named as executors of the will.

The girl had closed her eyes during the reading; and so they remained for some minutes after MacAllister's voice had ceased its harsh proclaiming.

"Outrageous!" cried Coffin. The Scot turned upon him slowly, showing a face aflame with scorn and anger. In his self-righteous blindness he believed Harold Coffin

to be an unprincipled fortune-hunter. Benjamin Spike, glaring at the offending paper, choked out an oath, crashed his great fist on the table and fairly spluttered with rage. Percy, pale as death, made no sound. He stood like one in a trance, gazing down at the girl's colorless face and drooped lids.

"Unsound mind. Unsound mind, as I be a livin' sinner," muttered Spike.

The girl opened her eyes. "Though it was his last wish — his dying wish — I will not marry Sir Stephen," she said, staring straight ahead of her. "He has threatened me — with poverty."

A loud rapping sounded on the cabin door. The gentlemen started nervously, as if the spirit of the autocratic governor, arising in anger from the shrouded body reposing in the starboard gangway, had demanded admittance. After a moment's hesitation, Coffin went to the door and opened it. He was confronted by nothing more formidable than the ship's cabin-boy.

"There be two bullies an' a skiff

a-roundin' into the harbor, sir, a-flyin' Master Guy's flag," said the boy.

His words reached the others in the cabin.

"Quick work," said Spike, in his everyday voice. "That there Cap'n Mason be a smart man."

"Mason. One of the executors," remarked MacAllister, dully.

Percy, swiftly and furtively, touched Elizabeth's wrist with his hand.

CHAPTER XIX

THE EXECUTOR'S ARRIVAL

THE gentlemen and the surviving colonists hurried ashore to receive Captain Mason and his relief expedition with some show of ceremony. But the ships' flags were not dipped, for they flapped at half-mast.

Captain Mason was a man of considerably past middle-age, square of build but somewhat stooped in the shoulders, hard of feature and keen-eyed. He was dressed more like a shipmaster than the governor of a colony, wore his own hair clubbed sailor-fashion, walked with a slight limp and carried a common ship's cutlass in his belt. In reply to the elaborate bowings and respectful salutations of the little group awaiting him on the beach, he lifted his weather-stained hat about two inches from his head and instantly jammed it back again.

MacAllister stepped forward. Captain

Mason fixed his keen, gray eyes upon him, barely touched the other's extended hand and immediately began to relieve his mind of that which was troubling it.

"You and old Duwaney have made a fine mess of things," said he.

Poor MacAllister flushed and stammered. Percy and the others turned their eyes away from the two. They were sorry for MacAllister now that the redoubtable, outspoken Captain Mason had hold of him.

"Imbecile!" exploded Mason. He looked up at the wreck of the colony. "Good work thrown away," he continued. "Honest lives wasted. I warned the Company a year ago. Incapables, you and Duwaney. No more fit to lead men than two infants. And so the old man died in a fit, did he? So the lads told me. Well, 'twas the best thing he could have done, after letting a few score fishermen rush his defences and slaughter his people. Oh, you need not say anything, young man. Coffin and his lads did the only work of the engagement that bears speaking of — and then along came this other vessel and

rescued the women. You must feel damn proud of your performance, Master Donald MacAllister. If you belonged to the navy or the army you'd be shot like a dog for your infernal uselessness and stupidity. Yes, by Heaven — that's the ugly truth of it."

MacAllister stepped back, all the pride and insolence gone out of him, pain and humiliation tearing him, his face twisted like a mask. He walked away, and up the path to the wrecked village, without a word or a gesture, like a man walking in his sleep.

The others gazed blankly at their visitor.

"For shame," said a quiet voice.

"Hey! What's that? Who spoke?" snapped Mason, his eyes glinting from face to face.

"I spoke," said John Percy.

"And who are you, to speak before you are spoken to?"

"John Percy, of the 'Jaguar.'"

"I have heard of you — and nothing to your credit. It will be wise of you to keep a civil tongue in your head."

“ My tongue is as God made it — and I am its only master.”

“ You are a damn, dirty traitor, sir, that's what you are.”

“ True, I no longer pretend allegiance to the person now on the throne of England,” replied Percy, calmly. “ On that point you cannot ruffle me. I cried shame on you just now because I felt that your behavior toward MacAllister was shameful — and I usually say what I feel. You spoke heartlessly — and the Scot is honest and brave enough, as you know. But as you have come to help these unfortunate people and I have remained in the harbor for the same purpose, we are wasting our time and theirs in standing here insulting each other. There is work to be done — and to begin with, you are one of the executors of Master Duwaney's will.”

“ An executor of Duwaney's will? Impossible!” exclaimed Mason.

Then Percy told him of the governor's last words, of the discovery of the will and of its purport. Also, he had to explain Elizabeth's presence in Bristol's Hope.

Captain Mason was astonished. "Mad!" he exclaimed. "A mad family! And yet the old man displayed a glimmering of sense when he arranged that the young lady is to marry Sir Stephen Morris. A substantial man is Sir Stephen. I know him well. 'Twill be a fine upward step for old Tom Duwaney's daughter. But it takes two to make an arrangement of that kind — and I wonder what Sir Stephen will think of it."

"You need feel no uneasiness on that score," replied Percy, coldly, "for this man and Duwaney had planned the thing together without the lady's knowledge."

"You don't seem to be on friendly terms with the baronet," said the governor of Guy's, sharply.

Percy was about to retort in a way that would have made hot blood again when Benjamin Spike stepped in front of him and addressed Mason. "Will ye give us permission to distribute the food an' blankets ye brought along, sir, whilst ye take a look at the young lady an' the will, sir, aboard the 'Jaguar?'"

“ And something warming, sir, before you begin business,” said the artful de Verney. “ You have made a long journey — and we have some excellent stuff aboard the ‘ Jaguar.’ ”

Percy, seeing that his friends were working in the cause of peace, choked down his anger at the visitor and seconded de Verney's suggestion.

“ As it is plainly my duty to go and read this will and see this young lady, I'll go,” said Captain Mason.

And so he went, in one of the “ Jaguar's ” boats and with the affable de Verney beside him.

“ By the eternal! ” exclaimed Percy, “ if I hear that he says one unkind word to her I'll have his life for it.”

“ Leave him to her, an' don't ye worry,” returned Spike. “ He'll not frighten her, ye may lay to that. An' he'll larn the truth o' how she feels about that there godless document from her own lips.”

“ Yes, she knows her own mind too well to be disturbed by John Mason's snarling.

Whatever she thinks to be right she will stand by, — and to hell with the doubloons,” said Coffin, with frank admiration. “So you need not worry, Jack,” he added, looking straight into Percy’s eyes. “She’s not the kind to be frightened into forgetting either her friends or her own heart.”

Just then, Donald MacAllister came running down to the group. He looked more like a maniac than a presumably sane Scotch gentleman.

“You heard him!” he cried. “God’s mercy! he must pay for it. I bungled — but he spoke to me like a dog. He will answer for it.”

“He is your senior officer,” said Percy. “If you fight him, ’twill be the end of your career in the Company’s service.”

The Scot laughed hysterically. “Damn the Company!” he replied. “Though he were the King of England, and I hung for it next day, I’d singe him for that. I am a bungler — and if it were only for myself I’d swallow the insults; but what of my family? — of my ancestors? — and of the dead gov-

error? He insulted and reviled the unburied dead, by the eternal!"

"You are right," said Coffin. "A gentleman cannot be expected to stand that sort of thing from any one. But he is your senior officer, as Percy says. Also, he is no match for you. He drags one foot — and he is not as large as you. Let me represent you in this matter, MacAllister. I'd consider it a great compliment — and no trouble with the Company, later. Your hand need not show in the affair, at all; and I promise you I'll square the thing for you, your family and the dead governor."

MacAllister stared at him with blank astonishment. "But you are as much in the Company's service as I am," he said. "And why should you fight him? He did not insult you — far from it."

"I have no career ahead of me; and I intend to give up my command as soon as this trouble is over — as soon as these people are provided for in some way."

"But — but this thing is impossible," returned MacAllister. "To be honest with

you, Coffin, I — I intend to engage you, too, before long. When you went after the lugger you left me behind, though you heard me shouting after you. That was treating me like dirt. You must give me satisfaction for that, Coffin.”

“ It would have been a waste of precious minutes to turn back,” replied Coffin, quietly. “ But of course, if you feel that I have slighted or ruffled you in any way, I’ll do what I can to — to mend matters. I am the last person in the world to refuse satisfaction to any gentleman who feels that I have injured his dignity. But this has nothing to do with Captain Mason. Ours is a private affair, between intimates you might say. So let us agree to let it rest until we have dealt with Mason, who, in words and manner, insulted every man and woman of this colony, alive and dead. Mason and I are somewhat on equal terms, physically. Let me deal with him — and after that I’ll be ready for you. I promise you not to kill him — for that would be going too far, and I am not a man of blood — and I also promise not to

let him kill me. Come, MacAllister, be reasonable. Be generous. This arrangement would suit everybody concerned — including Captain Mason. You, with your hot temper, might give him a mortal stroke, inadvertently. Then there'd be the devil to pay."

"By Heaven!" exclaimed Percy, "you two are talking like madmen." Then, catching a glance from Coffin, he understood. He knew a great deal of his friend, and he guessed more. MacAllister, with his uncontrollable temper and imperfect skill with both sword or pistol, would probably kill Captain Mason or suffer death himself if the affair were left in his hands. But Coffin, clear of head and a master of both weapons, would bring the trouble to a safe finish.

"But if you are determined that Mason should be called to account for his unwarrantable language and bad manners," he continued, "I think it would be well for Coffin to deal with him."

After a great deal of argument and persuasion, MacAllister was convinced (he was not in a fit state of mind for clear reason-

ing) that it would bring trouble to everybody in the colony, and many people in England and Scotland, if he were to engage Governor Mason. So it was agreed that Harold Coffin should find or make an opportunity, sometime after Duwaney's funeral, to bring Mason to book.

Spike and Coffin set to work at distributing the provisions from Guy's Colony among the sufferers. MacAllister helped them at this job for a little while, and then called two of the colonists and set them at the task of digging a grave for their late governor.

Percy returned to the "Jaguar." He had no more than stepped to the deck than he was accosted by Captain Mason, who had just issued from the cabin.

"I cannot understand that girl!" exclaimed Mason. "She is stark, staring mad, I do believe. Bless my soul! she treated me like — like nothing. And the things she said about her father's will, and about Sir Stephen Morris were — well, damnably unnatural."

“ This way, sir, where we can talk more privately,” interrupted Percy, leading the way to the little round-house which stood on the main deck just forward of the mainmast. He opened the door and bowed his visitor within. Mason paused for a second on the threshold, eyed Percy keenly as if a suspicion of treachery had suddenly come to him, then entered and sat down on the locker that ran around the little apartment. The other, having read the meaning of the glance, smiled quietly and left the door open.

A small table stood in the centre of the round-house, bolted to the deck. Percy placed a flask and two glasses on the table; but his guest refused to drink. “ I have already had a glass with that young man who came aboard with me,” he said, ungraciously. Then, “ I was speaking of my interview with Mistress Elizabeth Duwaney,” he continued. “ She behaved like one mentally deranged. If it was not for the helplessness of her position I’d wash my hands of the affair. She treated me most disre-

spectfully. But I will do my duty by her, whether she likes it or not. I'll take her to my own house at Guy's, where Mistress Mason will soon bring her to her senses."

"So! And have you suggested this to the young lady?" inquired Percy, unable to conceal his anxiety.

"All in good time. I'll speak to her again after we have put her father underground," replied the other.

"Did she refuse to comply with the conditions of the will?" asked the commander of the "Jaguar."

"Point-blank," answered Mason. "She said she never cared for Sir Stephen Morris and that now, since she has found him guilty of underhand methods, she despises him. Of course she will change her mind — unless she is a hopeless fool." He paused and turned his keen glance on Percy's face. "I suspect," he continued, "that her affections have been tampered with by some dishonorable adventurer. She as much as admitted, unguardedly, that she loved some one not very far away. Well, I'll put a stop to it.

Do you think MacAllister has caught her silly fancy? ”

“ I — I am sure I don't know. How the devil should I know? ” replied Percy, staring at the deck and uncomfortably conscious of the blood tingling in his cheeks.

“ Or young Coffin, perhaps? ”

“ I don't know, I tell you.”

“ Ah, so you don't know, Captain John Percy,” sneered Mason. “ Well, sir, I do know. I saw the truth in her face when I mentioned your name — and now I see it in yours. Guilty! Aye, guilty as hell! ”

Percy sprang to his feet. “ Do you say that she loves me? ” he cried, glaring down at his visitor with a flaming face. For all his sharpness of vision, Mason mistook the expression on Percy's face for the fire of guilty rage. Flurried but undaunted, he clapped his hand to the butt of a pistol in his belt.

“ And what if I do? ” he cried. “ Have a care what you are about. Stand back, or I'll blow your head off! ”

Without a word in reply to this gentle

threat, Percy stepped quickly from the round-house, slammed the door behind him and ran aft for the cabin. He was actually afraid of Captain Mason — afraid that the overbearing fellow would delay his meeting with Elizabeth, or perhaps stop it entirely with a bullet. Fear was foreign to his nature; but he felt it now with a vengeance. He must see Elizabeth, immediately, and learn the truth. That was the only thing in the wide world that mattered now; and yet that fool in the round-house, suspecting treason, might catch him with a bullet before he reached her. He entered the cabin without pausing to make known his arrival, closed the door after him and shot the bolts. He was safe. He could hear Captain Mason shouting his name outside.

CHAPTER XX

THE MAGIC HOUR

THE cabin was empty. John Percy stood quiet for a little while, peering around in the gloom and half-lights, listening anxiously.

This had the air of a sacred place to him since it had been given over to Elizabeth's sole use. Without raved the governor of Guy's and lay the nerveless body of the governor of Bristol's Hope. Without, anger and death; and within Youth listened for the sound of Love's breathing.

Percy moved forward to the centre of the cabin. He saw that the door of the berth that had once been his own stood ajar. Now he was to test his fate, and a sharp trembling possessed him like unto nothing he had ever experienced before in stress of danger or exhilaration. "Elizabeth," he called, in a voice that broke scarcely above a whisper.

The narrow door of the berth opened

noiselessly and the girl stood there, motionless and silent, with downcast eyes. Her splendid hair hung loose and tumbled upon her shoulders, and in her clear brow and perfect cheeks a tender radiance was lightening and expanding. From throat to feet she was draped in her brother's great cloak.

Percy advanced swiftly and sank on one knee before her. He did not look up but knelt so, with bowed head, motionless as a cavalier carved from stone.

"Elizabeth," he began, huskily, slowly; and then, "I love you," he whispered. "As God sees me, I love you! I am yours — body and soul — to make or mar. God have mercy on me!"

"Look up," she breathed.

He raised his face and looked up into her eyes. They were beautiful, steady, pleading and demanding, and at once shadowed and illumined to unfathomable depths. And he knew that she was reading him, heart and soul; seeing the truth, the fibre of his spirit, the true metal of his heart. He knew that she was testing the reality, proving the fu-

ture and not prying into the past. And kneeling so, motionless and scarcely breathing, he unshaded the windows of his being — of his very soul — to that tender and glorious inquiry.

Her hands moved toward him from the folds of the great cloak. She stooped and laid her arms about his neck and pressed her lips to his forehead. “ Oh! I love you so,” she breathed.

The strong man trembled, closed his eyes and clutched a fold of her garments for support. They remained thus for a little while — for a life-time, perhaps — for a dozen heart-beats. Then he arose mightily to his feet, raising her with him, pressed her to his breast and kissed her lips and her eyes again and again. And all the while, unknowingly, he murmured her name, and the name of God, and strange little oaths that were surely recorded in Heaven as prayers of thanksgiving.

At last Percy brought his mind back to earth and its petty necessities and complications; but his heart remained aloft in that

region of gold and rosy mists, starry highways and azure battlements and Youth's imperishable pleasure-gardens — a region that only the hearts of lovers and saints and poets may ascend to, above the dust and clangor of this life, until the final releasing of the spirit.

“But the sacrifice,” he whispered. “I win all. You relinquish all — the wealth — the great and sheltered life.”

Elizabeth smiled fleetingly. The white lids fluttered up for an instant and drooped again. She had answered him in unmistakable terms.

“But it is a serious matter,” continued Percy, gravely yet joyously. “I am an outlaw, an exile from my own country, a criminal in the eyes of the English law. I hunt — and I am hunted.”

“And you are poor,” said the girl; “and wicked, smug persons have set a price on your head. You see, Dearest Dear, how I know everything. You are brave, and true to your friends, and gentle, for all the tales they tell of battle and bloodshed. And you

love me, and I love you; and would you ask me to trade away our love for a great house, and gold and heartache — and a sheltered life? ”

“ As God sees me,” replied Captain Percy, “ I love you as I never thought a man could love a woman. The glory and the wonderful miracle of it blind me. I loved you when I first saw you — and the love has grown with the passing of every hour, near you or afar from you, day and night.”

“ I saw it,” she answered. “ It flashed into your eyes when they first met mine, aboard the ‘ Good Fortune.’ ”

“ And you? ”

“ Yes, I loved you then — and more and more, ever since.”

After these important matters had been dealt with to their mutual satisfaction, he told her of his plans for their future — of the embowered place in the southern island and of the safe retreat in the New England colony; of how all act and intention of revenge were now put by and his only wish was to live for her.

A sharp rapping on the outer door of the cabin interrupted their planning of the wonderful future. With a sigh and the hundredth embrace, Percy released the girl from his arms, stepped to the door, noiselessly withdrew the bolts and opened it. There stood Master de Verney.

“Mason is on his high horse again and has gone ashore in a fury,” he said, with evident relish. “He has been damning all of us up and down — and you in particular. He has read your little secret and swears that he will take the young lady to his own house, and the protection of Mistress Mason, if he has to resort to force. He even suggested that he might hang us all by the necks for pirates; but he implied that he will let us live until after Duwaney’s funeral, which is to take place in an hour.”

“Oh, let the poor old boy have his fling. It does him good, no doubt, and it does not hurt us,” replied Percy, stepping out of the cabin and closing the door behind him.

“You seem to be in an amazing sweet

frame of mind," remarked de Verney, eying him inquiringly.

The captain laid a hand on his friend's shoulder. "I am," he said — "and no wonder. She loves me. She is willing to marry me. And yet she knows that I am an outlaw — she knows everything."

De Verney congratulated him warmly and sincerely. Under the worldly veneer and foppish airs of this offspring of a French father and English mother there was a genuine fibre of manhood. "You are a lucky mortal," he said. "By the eternal! she is a woman in ten thousand. I have seen a-many, John, here and there, but never a one her equal. If it wasn't for fear of your uncouth great bilboe and your disgusting temper I'd not let you win the prize so easily. But there — I am a man of peace. But what are we to do? — we poor devils who have no lady to love us and no good comrade to command us and a risky undertaking to hand whereby we must fill our pockets? Who will take your berth aboard the old 'Jaguar' now, John?"

“ My dear friend,” replied Percy, deeply moved, “ that is a question I could not find the courage to deal with but for the great joy that has come to me. The thing must be faced, however; and I think we’ll be able to decide everything to-morrow. Of course it is for me to suggest only and for you to decide. What think you of young Coffin? ”

“ The little fellow is a hero,” returned de Verney. “ Our lads have learned to worship him — as a fighting-man — from the talk of the crew of the ‘ Good Fortune.’ And even Horace admires him. There has been a good deal of quiet talk of asking him to join us for this last cruise. If we must lose you I believe we could not find a better substitute than Coffin. He is all fire and lightning, that little bag of bones! I do believe he’d flash his iron on the devil himself! ”

“ You are right. I will find out what he has to say to the suggestion,” returned Percy.

The funeral of the late Master Thomas Duwaney took place about two hours before

sunset, with pomp and circumstance that would have warmed the old ex-alderman's heart. Governor Mason would have it so, for the honor and the glory of the great Company and the Royal Charter under which it had its being; and among the others private feelings were cloaked for the time for the sake of Elizabeth. The body was rowed ashore in the "Jaguar's" largest boat, stitched in sail-cloth, sea-fashion, wrapped about in the red ensign; and eight men pulled on the oars and Captain Mason and Master Coffin sat elbow to elbow in the stern-sheets. MacAllister had not been able to nerve himself to take his right place beside the governor of Guy's. He was afraid that he might forget himself so far as to pitch Mason overboard; an insult to his dead commander and Mistress Duwaney which he quaked to think of. So he followed in another boat with Spike and John Percy. Every soul from the two ships, save the wounded, Elizabeth and one of the women, attended the funeral. Since the disclosure of the will the girl felt that her father had

behaved treacherously toward her; and her grief for this was greater and far more bitter than the grief of her loss. And, for all her brave heart, she was afraid to meet the hard eyes of Captain Mason across that poor clay.

A firing-party was made up of the survivors of the ruined plantation. As soon as the leading boat reached the shore the grating on which the body lay was lifted by four of the rowers and carried up to the open grave, escorted by the firing-party and the gentlemen. The others crowded close behind. On the deserted ships the ensigns hung at half-mast. For all the clutter of people, there was no sound above a whisper and the scrape of heavy feet. Up the steep and twisting path moved the bulk of senseless clay in its glorious shroud, with the heavy grating lurching like a raft on a stormy sea and the brawny fellows puffing and straining. On either side scrambled the lads with the muskets, doing their best to maintain the required military formation.

The raw, unlovely trench was surrounded.

Governor Mason, plain and formidable, with his weather-stained hat placed carefully on a mound of fresh earth at his feet, opened his book and read the words that are there. From force of habit, he delivered those passages that are intended for burials at sea. His voice rang level and clear, but without feeling.

“ Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay. . . . In the midst of life we are in death; of whom may we seek for succor but of Thee, O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased. . . . Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts; shut not thy merciful ears to our prayer. . . . Forasmuch as it has pleased Almighty God to take unto himself the soul of our dead brother here departed, we therefore commit his body to the deep, to be turned into corruption, looking for the resurrection of the body when the Sea shall give up her dead.”

The mistake passed unnoticed by the majority of the people. The four sailors at the grating did their part in true seaman fashion; at a sign from Mason they hoisted one end of the grating with a will, as if the shadowy deeps in truth awaited the offering of clay, and slid the red-shrouded body violently into the trench. A woman screamed at that. Captain Mason turned and raised his hand with a magnificent gesture, and she crouched against a companion and was silent. Then one of the sailors jumped down into the grave, straightened the body and withdrew the flag from the long, white shape.

“Leave the flag!” cried Coffin.

Governor Mason shot a withering glance at him. “Bring up the ensign,” he commanded.

Governor Mason’s voice was clear and hard; but evidently the mariner did not hear it. He spread the red bunting over the body again, reverently and slowly arranging the glowing folds. When the thing was done to his satisfaction he vaulted out of the grave and returned to his place beside his com-

rades of the "Jaguar," without so much as a glance toward the keen-eyed, hard-jawed autocrat from Guy's.

The more observant of the company felt decidedly ill at ease, for they fully expected an angry scene between Mason and Coffin. But Coffin stood straight and unconcerned, with his glance on the ground; and Mason, with a visible effort, went on with the work in hand.

Three volleys were fired above the grave by the brave but untrained squad; and at the sound of the last the flags were hauled down by the wounded aboard the ships. A strange burial this, for a respectable ex-alderman of Bristol—a queer jumble of naval and military honors. But it would have pleased Duwaney vastly, could he have but seen and heard it.

The deep trench was filled in with the rocky soil and a wooden cross was set up. Then the men were ordered back to the ships.

Governor Mason turned to Master Harold Coffin. "I have decided to remove the sur-

vivors of this plantation around to my own harbor," he said. "Is the 'Good Fortune' in a fit state to make the trip?"

"You must ask Master Spike," replied Coffin.

"How so?"

"I resign my command of her; therefore you must address any inquiries, or orders, to Spike."

"What d'ye mean?"

"I mean that I have decided not to remain in the Company's service another hour, since serving the Company means serving under you."

"This is mutiny!—treason!" cried Mason. "You have no right to throw up your command at a moment's notice. You will suffer for this—and for other things. I'll have you in irons, by Heaven! I'll hang you at sunrise!"

Coffin smiled bitterly. "You are a low, foul-mouthed dog," he said, quietly. "You have an amazing fine voice and a red, ugly face, God knows!—but your liver is white. You would hang me, would you? Let me

hear you give the order to your men — and see what happens.”

Mason was fairly beside himself with rage. He saw at a glance that it would be madness to order the handful of men he had brought with him from Guy's to arrest the offender; for his observant eyes had seen, from the first, that this sickly, insolent youth was a great person to the crews of both ships and to the survivors of the colony.

“ You are a coward,” he cried. “ You take advantage of the strength of your following to insult me.”

CHAPTER XXI

THE DUEL AT DAWN

THIS charge seemed to pain Harold Coffin acutely. "I hope you do not think so poorly of me," he said.

"Not more poorly of you than of any other damn traitor and rogue," retorted Mason, quickly.

"I am sorry that you think I defy and insult you because I am surrounded by my friends," continued the other. "It is not so, I assure you, Captain Mason. I am neither a coward nor a bully. I have a sword here — or a pistol, if you like — and I look no farther for assistance. If I have insulted you, it has been but in return for your own insulting words and attitude toward the dead man, his daughter, myself and my friends."

"Do you mean that you want to fight me?" sneered Mason. "You rogue! do you expect to be treated like a gentleman? It

would be less than you deserve if I drew my pistol now and shot you through your black heart. And even if you were an honest man I could not meet you. I do not match myself against either cripples or children.”

A low sigh escaped the little group of spectators at these flaying words. Harold Coffin stepped forward and struck the governor of Guy's Colony across the face with his open hand.

The others sprang between them. “Not now! Not here!” exclaimed Master Down. “This affair must go through decently and in order. The light is failing now.”

“Then let it be soon,” snarled Mason. “If I must, I'll do it; though 'twill take years for the filth to wear from my hands.”

Harold Coffin slept soundly that night. His mind was at rest, for he had come to decisions on several questions that had been troubling him of late. After the scene with Mason he and Percy had spent an hour together in confidential talk. He had heard of his friend's happiness without surprise and without a sign of any other emotion than

sympathy. He was capable of fortitude in distress of spirit as well as of body. That dream could never have been for him — so he let it go. He believed in Percy's goodness of heart and manliness; and so, after putting a few shrewd questions as to his intentions concerning the future and receiving satisfactory replies to the same, he felt that the girl was in safe hands. And he had heard of the chance to join the "Jaguar" as her commander on her last risky cruise; and that had moved him deeply and happily and filled him with a tender affection for his fellow-men. Also, he had heard the plans for the morning, and had agreed to them as heartily as if they had concerned something as pleasant and as unimportant as a breakfast party. Then and there he had decided on his course of action with both Mason and MacAllister; but he hoped that the Scot would change his mind about the affair at the last moment. Since he had seen the swaggerer suffering from remorse his feelings toward him had altered materially.

It is a fine and restful thing to make up

one's mind. Feeling that he had nothing to worry over for the next few hours at least, Harold Coffin slept the sleep of the unharassed until, at a dismal time before dawn, de Verney entered his berth with a lighted candle.

“Time to be stirring, comrade,” said de Verney, gently.

Harold smiled, yawned and climbed out of his bunk. His colorless eyes were very mild after his sleep; his dull, yellowish hair (which had been cut raggedly by his servant so that certain wounds might be the more easily plastered) stood untidily on end. Beneath his short night-shirt showed legs that looked like nothing but two bones, and draped in that thin garment his frame appeared more frail than ever.

De Verney gazed at the pitiful figure of his principal in wonder. He could scarcely believe that this poor, pale, childish-looking person was that formidable sworder and pistol, Harold Coffin.

“I’ll be ready in two shakes,” said Coffin.

“You must have something to eat.”

“ No, I’ll breakfast afterwards. I’ll just splash a can of salt water over myself, to tone my muscles, and swallow a nip of French brandy, to tone my stomach.”

De Verney went away for the brandy, taking the candle with him; and when he returned he found the warrior half-dressed and the deck and bunk bedewed with brine.

“ There is nothing like salt water to freshen one for work,” remarked Coffin, pleasantly. He swallowed the brandy in two gulps. “ Mason named cutlasses, I believe,” he said.

The other nodded mournfully. “ That is the devil of it,” he said. “ Weight counts for so much with cutlasses. One might as well fight with clubs. No chance for skill. Just swing and hammer.”

“ I think you are wrong there,” replied Coffin. “ You have made the rapier your weapon, and having mastered it, despise all others. It is the finest in the world, beyond a doubt, and the gentleman’s iron. But I discovered, a few years back, that in soldiering one cannot always select the weapon by

which he is to be attacked. So I made a study of all manner of tools — of half-pikes, sabres, cutlasses and even of clubs. If I had not, my worthless bones would have been coral or dust long before this. And it is wonderful what you can do with a cutlass if you put your mind honestly to it.”

By this time his toilet was completed. He flung a cloak around him, and the two went noiselessly out of the berth, out of the cabin and across the deck to the shoreward rail. Dawn was breaking along the eastward sea, clear as glass and bright as white flame.

“It promises for a beautiful day,” remarked Coffin.

A little skiff lay ready under the ship's side. They lowered themselves into it. De Verney took the oars and pulled quietly for shore. In the fresh and growing light they saw two other skiffs close ahead of them. In one sat Captain Mason and Benjamin Spike, and in the other Percy and MacAllister.

The instant Coffin set foot on the beach, Spike stepped over to him. “My heart is

with ye, lad, though I've been chosen to back t'other one," he muttered. Then he returned to his principal and led the way up the path. Percy lagged behind and pressed Coffin's hand without a word.

They reached the place of the broken plantation, crossed it and headed toward the woods of dark firs beside the little river. At the edge of the trees MacAllister turned and waited for Coffin. "I want to tell you," he said, "that I think better of you than I did. And I have learned to agree with you in some of your views — concerning loyalty, for instance. I hope you will manage Mason without suffering yourself."

"Shake hands," said Coffin.

"No — I can't take your hand yet," returned the Scot, awkwardly. "I must fight you, you know — this very morning, if you feel fit for it. I must do it; but the sooner it is over with the better I'll be pleased. Then I'll shake hands with you gladly — if I am able to. And mind you, I don't thirst for your blood — as I once did. But I have my pride."

In a small, level clearing beside the brown river, between the slobbering water and the silent wood, the gentlemen took up their positions. A white mist still drifted on the stream; but the light from the east came clearly in to the meadow. Mason laid off both his cloak and doublet, folded them with care and placed his hat on top of them. Spike took them from his hands, carried them back a dozen paces and laid them on the ground. Coffin shook his cloak from his shoulders and flung it into a bush. Percy produced four cutlasses and arranged them in a row on the wet sward.

“ I want to use my own iron,” said Captain Mason, speaking for the first time since coming ashore.

“ That is not in order,” replied de Verney. “ ’Tis flat against the rules.”

“ Let him use it,” said Coffin. “ He is partial to the feel of it, no doubt. And I, too, have a favor to ask.”

“ Name it,” snapped Mason.

“ May I kick off my boots? ” asked the other.

The governor of Guy's laughed harshly. "Kick them off, by all means, if you have any objections to dying with them on."

"Thank you, I have," returned Coffin, with a flitting smile. He pulled his great boots from his stockinged feet and tossed them after his cloak. Then he went over to the cutlasses, drew one from its scabbard, balanced it in his hand, struck the flat and then the back of it against a tree and returned with it to his place.

De Verney and Spike, without removing their cloaks, drew their weapons and each took post abreast and five paces to the left of his principal. Mason and Coffin faced each other, extended their right arms and crossed their short, heavy blades. So they stood for a few seconds, eye to eye, steady as rock.

"Are you ready, gentlemen?" inquired de Verney's voice, clear as a bell. "Then on the word three, fall to. One — two — three."

Action began on the instant. The robust governor's blade pressed the other aside,

struck it a hammering blow near the hilt, and circled like a wheel of white fire, direct for Coffin's pale and untidy head. But it found nothing—not even the guard of steel; and quick as the fang of an adder was the retort. Mason spun on his heel, his left arm across his body, his right, still gripping the cutlass, hanging limp. His left hand clutched his right shoulder, and already the blood was crawling between his fingers. The coarse color was fled from his face and his hard eyes wore an expression of outraged astonishment.

“I think you will find that you cannot raise your arm,” said Harold Coffin, with a little bow.

“You damned imp! Curse you and your tricks!” muttered Mason.

Coffin turned to Master Spike. “I am satisfied,” he said; “though some people can't learn civility without being killed. But my honor is satisfied. You had better tie him up, Ben.”

For a wild half-minute Mason entertained the idea of continuing the engagement with

his left hand; but a saving thought of Mistress Mason, his children and other pleasant, worldly things came to his mind.

Coffin walked over to where the cutlasses lay and was about to throw his own stained weapon on the ground when MacAllister stopped him with a gesture.

“That was splendid,” said the Scot, huskily. “I never saw such neat work — nor such merciful work. But now — if you are not tired — will you oblige me?”

Coffin gazed at him intently. “Why do you want to fight with me?” he asked.

“I have to — to clear my conscience,” replied the Scot. “I have thought all manner of unpardonable things of you. I must fight you. My self-respect demands it.”

“I take it that you do not want to kill me,” said Coffin.

“Kill you!” exclaimed the other. “I’d rather die myself, than that. You do not understand. I feel that I must give you satisfaction, whether you want it or not. I owe it to you, Coffin. But this is not the way I felt at first.”

“ Well,” replied Coffin, “ this is an uncommon affair and I am at a loss to see it clearly — to catch the right and the wrong in it. But if you honestly feel that you want to cross blades with me, I am at your service. But I must tell you frankly that I have nothing against you and therefore do not intend to injure you.”

The Scot looked puzzled and uncomfortable. “ You must nick me, at least,” he cried.

Coffin smiled. “ I believe I understand you,” he said. “ You feel that you have treated me unjustly in your thoughts — and you want to right yourself with me. Then let us get to work, my friend, with the understanding that first blood settles this matter forever.”

CHAPTER XXII

A TASTE OF GLORY

THE passage at arms between Coffin and MacAllister was viewed with some wonder and a good deal of amusement by Percy and de Verney. They had heard the argument, and could see that the enmity between these two was already dead; but they thought that the Scot was making a fool of himself in insisting on even so mild an encounter as one that called for peace at the first sign of blood. MacAllister's face was very solemn, however, and Coffin's was at least serious, when the two crossed swords.

The cutlasses had been discarded for rapiers. It was the Scot's intention, at first, to allow his opponent's point to touch him, without loss of time; but as soon as the steel began to flash before him, pressing, darting, twisting, threatening here and there, he forgot his commendable intention and set himself to guard, parry and return with des-

perate energy. He became excited, and was soon working away as if he meant to run Coffin through the body.

Coffin played calmly and beautifully, keeping up a masterly appearance of attack but often turning his point aside himself when the other's guard was not there to meet it. When he saw the danger signals flashing in MacAllister's eyes he decided to prick his arm immediately and so end the affair; but at that moment all his skill was called for to turn aside a thrust that would have spit-
ted him like a lark — and he managed to twist it away by only a slender fraction of an inch. That thrust changed his plans. He saw that the Scot's wild temper was up and that the game was becoming far too dangerous for both of them. So he attacked briskly, with no more meaningless display, closing inch by inch. MacAllister came to a stand-still; then he began to give ground. At last Coffin felt the other's blade where he wanted it — and, in an instant, MacAllister stood empty-handed and his weapon hopped on the grass five paces away.

For a moment or two MacAllister's face was a crimson mask of rage and chagrin; then his good sense got the better of his temper. He laughed with a somewhat painful note. "That is done," said he — "and well done, thank God! I have had my fight and am still alive. My conscience in this matter is cleared, my honor is satisfied — and my foolish vanity is pricked and exploded."

"And now I hope I may consider you as a friend," said Coffin.

"If you will," replied the Scot. "And I trust," he added, "that I shall prove a more efficient friend than I have an enemy."

They shook hands, eyed each other inquiringly, and smiled.

"That was as good as a play," said de Verney — "and acted with quite a touch of reality, too."

The four friends left the narrow meadow and returned to the beach by the way they had come. Sky, sea and shore were now flooded with sunshine.

"We must go aboard the 'Jaguar.' An

important question is awaiting our consideration there," said Percy.

As the two skiffs passed under the "Good Fortune's" stern, a familiar voice hailed them in guarded tones. There was old Benjamin Spike leaning far over the taffrail.

"The guv'nor has cut up tremendous," he informed them, in a gusty whisper that carried like the wail of a defective fog-horn. "He be clearin' for Guy's inside the hour; but he'll be back bright an' early to-morrow, I take it, with his whole outfit. He commenced the hangin' talk again — an', 'pon my soul, I don't be a-feelin' any too safe about my own neck. An' he lays to treasure up the lady for Sir Stephen Morris if it busts him to do it."

"I think it will bust him," murmured de Verney.

"Where is he now?" asked Percy.

"Aboard one o' his own craft yonder, gettin' ready to haul out. But he'll be back to-morrow, sir, so he says, to get the young lady and to hang you an' Master Coffin an' clap the rest o' us in irons."

Coffin laughed. "We promise not to let him hurt you, Ben," he called. Then the skiffs passed on to the "Jaguar."

Master Down met them as they stepped to the deck, and on hearing a word or two of what had transpired ashore he swore shockingly at the world in general and at de Verney in particular. "Why the devil didn't you take me along with you to see the fun?" he asked.

"Don't pay any attention to him," said de Verney to the others. "I went to him this morning, in the kindness of my heart, and tried to get him out of his bunk; but it was of no more use than trying to arouse the dead to see a bit of sport. He is a dull and unambitious lad at that hour."

"You should have dragged me out," complained the other. "I'd willingly have sacrificed a few hours of my beauty sleep to see that flint-eyed old cock John Mason get his comb nicked."

"You missed more than that," replied de Verney, unfeelingly. "To wind up the entertainment, these two gentlemen had an

exhibition bout." He indicated Coffin and MacAllister with a wave of the hand.

MacAllister flushed and gazed down at the deck.

"Where is Percy?" asked Coffin.

"Ah, he has slipped away!" exclaimed de Verney. "He has gone to the cabin, of course — and I don't blame him. Let us have breakfast in the round-house while he is saying 'good morning;' and then we can muster all hands forward and get to business."

Coffin glanced at the Scot's face — then drew him aside.

"John Percy is one of the best fellows in the world," he whispered. "He has a property down in the West Indies — and this very morning he is going to resign his command of the 'Jaguar.' I believe they intend to offer the post to me — and if so, I'll accept it. Now be brave, my friend! The lady whom you love — and whom I love — loves our good friend Percy. She has promised to marry him. Remember your pride and your courage, Donald, and

don't try to upset what the gods have ordained."

MacAllister looked at him bravely; but with a face still and lightless as carven wood. "I knew there was no hope for me," he replied. "I deserve no such blessing. I remember my pride — and there is no anger in me. But they are staring at us — and they must not see our hurts."

Coffin pressed his new friend's hand. "You must stand by me," he said, loudly. "With the Company after us, we had better hold together. Now let's to breakfast."

As they entered the round-house, MacAllister gripped Harold's arm. "If you mean that," said he, "I am with you."

Food and drink were brought to the gentlemen in the round-house. Master Down, having already broken his fast, applied himself to the full-bodied ale. He said that he was very low in spirit at having missed the morning's entertainment. De Verney talked cheerily. Any form of excitement, so long as it was not especially dangerous to himself, lightened his heart and mind like a tonic

draught. He was neither a coward nor a weakling, and would face death or the chance of it as readily as most adventures; but he was not a fire-eater and scorner of odds like Harold Coffin. Coffin was hungry after his early exertions and applied himself to the business in hand with a will. Poor Donald MacAllister, however, could make but a pretense of eating and drinking. Compared to the frail Devonshire man, he was unseasoned against shocks. Smitten in spirit, stripped naked of the old vanity that had for so long been as a comfortable cloak to his soul, with faith in his old masters crumbled about him and his feet on the verge of a new and strange career, he sat silent and unheeding at the little table.

Presently Percy entered, bright of eye, glorious of face. As if afraid to give any of his friends a chance to speak—for he dreaded that some merry and harmless remark of de Verney's might fall in the little room like a lighted match in a powder keg—he immediately began to talk himself.

“It is time, now, for me to publicly resign

my charge of this ship in the hearing of the lads forward," he said. "And if your two — Down and de Verney — want Coffin to take my place, then I can make the suggestion to them. The sooner we have this matter settled, the better."

"Yes. We must know how we stand, and who is who, before Mason gets back with reinforcements," replied de Verney.

Down turned to Coffin. "Is this true?" he asked. "Do you really mean to join us for a rash and merry flutter?"

Coffin nodded. "If you have no objections," he said.

"You will be the saving of us," returned Down. "I only hope you may not be won away from us, before the voyage is over, as — as has happened before with equally valourous commanders. Desertion of one's ship and shipmates is supposed to be a disgraceful thing; but when it is done in the name of love it seems to be looked upon as a creditable performance."

Coffin looked at the other with an innocent and somewhat puzzled smile. He was quite

aware that Down was trying to be humorous at Percy's expense; but humor of this kind, heavily and painfully manufactured, did not amuse him. "I did not desert my command of the 'Good Fortune' for love," he said, "but to get clear of Captain Mason."

"Of course. Of course," replied Master Down, considerably flustered. "Nothing but a fighting-machine, after all," he reflected, "and even duller than I expected."

De Verney was not so dull, however. He winked at Coffin. "Poor Horace," he said. "His nurse let him fall when he was a baby and he struck the ground with the top of his head."

MacAllister, who had been sitting all this time with his glance on the table, in a grim silence, suddenly raised his head. "I want to join you, too," he said. "I am not of much use, as you know — but I am willing to learn. I want to stake what I have in the 'Jaguar' and share the risks of this cruise."

"You! An outlaw?" exclaimed de Verney.

"Why not? It seems as honest an occu-

pation as any other — the way you gentlemen practise it,” replied the Scot.

“It is risky,” cautioned Down. “In spite of our honesty, every hand is against us. No matter how honorably we may give battle, defeat and capture means that we all hang by the neck like common pirates.”

But Donald MacAllister’s mind was made up. He was determined to forget the heart-ache and humiliations that had come upon him so recently and suddenly in a desperate voyage with these brave comrades. The treatment which he had received at the hands of Captain Mason had effectively driven all feelings of loyalty toward the great Company out of his heart. He would mix in dangers and rare adventures, and forget his sorrow and shame, and learn to fight — even at the risk of that dishonorable death of hanging by the neck. And so it was settled.

The gentlemen left the round-house, and the entire ship’s company was paraded on the main deck; for the “Jaguar’s” discipline had always been, and still was, that of a ship of war — with the exception of the

severe treatment that was common on the king's ships. Percy addressed the men briefly but feelingly; and though the rumor that he intended to resign his command had already gone the rounds of the "Jaguar" the men expressed the sense of their loss with sincerity and a deal of clamor.

"We knows why yer honor be a-leavin' of us," remarked a gunner, archly; and at that laughter and shouting went up, and good wishes were bawled, and caps were tossed high. It would have been madness to expect any observance of discipline now. De Verney ran forward, hat in hand.

"Now, my lads, three cheers for the lady," he cried. "All together, as if you were going over the side of a Spaniard."

The cheers were given with a will. The men of the "Good Fortune" crowded to the seaward rail of that battered vessel and shouted across the water to know what the celebration was about. Catching a hint of the truth, they too began to cheer. Now Percy's name was yelled, and cheered to the echo aboard both vessels. Sailors are like

children, ready to shout and skip and toss up their head-gear at the slightest provocation and the shortest notice. Keen to celebrate and keen to fight were these merry lads.

Percy roared at them, trying to get along with what he had to say; but he might as well have saved his wind. Then de Verney rushed back to his friends, seized Coffin by the arm and dragged him forward among the surging, bawling lads. "Listen to me!" he yelled, drawing their attention by pushing them to right and left and knocking them about. "Listen to me, you mad lubbers! Here's Master Coffin — who tanned the hides of the fishermen — who beat them one to four — who nicked old Mason. He'll take command, I tell you! He is ready to help hunt the Spaniards. Listen to me! Here's Master Coffin — who chased the lugger in a skiff. Captain Coffin — of the 'Jaguar.' "

The lads whom de Verney was knocking about caught some of the words and all the meaning. "Coffin! Cap'n Coffin," they

shouted. "He'll command us. He eats Spaniards. Up with Master Death an' Glory! Up with little blood an' bones! Cap'n Coffin — o' the good ship 'Jaguar!' "

The whole crew began to shout his name. Up he went, held high and lovingly by giant hands. Others hoisted de Verney. Those who could not reach either of these two heroes rushed at Percy, Down and MacAllister and swung them to the same glorious position above the bobbing heads and bellowing lips. The rollicking fellows began marching, each group proclaiming the virtues of the gentleman it carried. "Master Down. Here be Master Down. Often Down but never beat." "Who nicked Guvnor Mason?" "Cap'n Percy! he give the king hisself a belly-ache." "Way for de Verney, the terrier for Spanish rats!" "Master Scotchman! Ho for the MacAllister — the lad who don't know when he's beat."

The gentlemen grinned and hoped that their admirers would not drop them and break their necks. As for Donald MacAllister — he wanted to embrace the lads who

held him high in that place of glory. They might have left him standing there, alone. But no, even in him they could see something to honor — and here he was, bruised and breathless, supported by hands like knobs of wood — one of the five heroes. This was glory. Tears dimmed his eyes. “God bless you, lads,” he shouted, huskily.

CHAPTER XXIII

ANOTHER CASE OF KIDNAPPING

WHEN Coffin's name rang across the water, the lads of the "Good Fortune" read the meaning of it. Their excitement grew. Six of them went to where Benjamin Spike stood at the rail, gazing across at the "Jaguar."

"Meanin' no disrespect to you, sir," said one of the men, "an' trustin' not to leave ye short-handed, we begs ye humbly to let us join the 'Jaguar,' along with Master Coffin, sir."

Spike turned and stared at them; but not unkindly. "Ye be simple souls, lad, an' no mistake," he said. "I be in command o' this here ship now, since Master Coffin has cut the Company's service — an' here ye come, six o' ye hand-in-hand, an' ax me to let ye desert the ship. It can't be done, lads — in that way. 'Tis dead against a com-

mander's duty to owners an' ship to give leave to his men to desert. 'Twould cost me my job, lads. No! Ye cannot follow Master Coffin. Ye must stay with me, here where ye belong." (He said this in a voice that reached the ears of every man aboard.) "But," he added, guardedly, "if the six o' ye be for sailin' with Master Coffin, ye'll find a skiff in the water, on t'other side. Ye'd best go quietly, so I won't see ye."

Thus six of the "Good Fortune's" crew deserted their ship and threw in their lots with that of their beloved commander. And old Ben Spike, leaning heavily on the rail, was blind as a bat.

At last the tumult subsided and the demonstrations aboard the "Jaguar" were at an end. Order was restored. The lads returned to their posts, taking their six new messmates along with them.

Percy, about to rap on the cabin door, held his hand, turned aside and went up the star-board ladder to the poop. Captain Mason's two bullies had left their berths. He looked

seaward. They were not in sight. They had cleared the mouth of the harbor.

“ I sincerely hope that Mason will not be rash enough to return, before we get away, and try to make trouble,” he reflected. “ But I scarcely think his men could be forced to attack us, even if he should be such a fool as to bring them around. Why, ’twould be like brothers at each other’s throats! And the lads of the ‘ Good Fortune ’ would give him no help.”

He went down the ladder and knocked on the cabin door. There was no answer. He had left both Elizabeth and her attendant there, not much more than an hour ago. He knocked again, louder. Perhaps they were asleep in their berths. He thumped the oak with the butt of a pistol. Still no reply. Then he laid his hand on the knob of the door. The knob turned; but the door remained firm. Beyond a doubt, it was bolted. His heart felt as if it were shaking in his side. The door fastened! No reply to his rappings! What, in the name of Heaven, could it mean? In sudden panic, he beat on

the senseless oak with both fists. For a second, he wondered if the girl herself had fastened the door against him. Could it have been all a play? Had she but pretended to love him? The mad, singeing suspicion flashed away as swiftly as it had come to him. She was in danger! There had been some treasonous work!

Coffin and de Verney had been watching him; and the meaning of his amazing behavior had suddenly come clear to them. "Try the other side—the larboard gangway," cried de Verney, at the same time making for the spot himself. But Percy reached the gangway first. The others followed. Through the narrow passage and into a tiny sail-room broke the desperate lover, with his friends close at his heels. From the sail-room, by a narrow door in the bulkhead, he passed into one of the berths opening upon the cabin. Through that he dashed madly. The cabin was empty!

He stood in the middle of the wide, dusky place, staring fearfully around him. He saw that the door of Elizabeth's berth was open.

He called her name — and no answer came to him.

“ You must look into her berth,” said Coffin.

“ I—I cannot do it! By God, I cannot! ” replied Percy in a shaking whisper.

De Verney had been working swiftly. “ It is empty,” he said. “ All the berths are empty; and the woman is gone, too. But the blankets have gone from this bunk — and here is a piece of rope, newly cut — and here is a lady’s slipper.”

It was true. On the deck, at the door of her berth, lay a yard of light rope, and on the locker under the square port lay one of her narrow slippers. And the sash of the big port hung wide open.

Percy seemed dazed. He took the satin shoe in his hand and turned it this way and that. “ What does it mean? ” he whispered. “ For God’s sake, tell me, de Verney.”

“ The other is nowhere about,” said de Verney. “ I have hunted everywhere.”

Coffin was standing on the locker, leaning half-way out of the port. He turned his

head. "Yes, it could easily be done," he said. "It was clever — and daring. Mason is a hard man to beat."

"What do you mean?" asked Percy. His mind was benumbed with apprehension.

"They have been carried away — again," said Coffin. "This time by the governor of Guy's. It must have happened when we were forward with the lads. In at the port, and out by the port — that's how it was done."

"Well, I'm damned!" exclaimed Percy; but the terror had gone out of his eyes.

"Thank God!" cried de Verney. "We'll soon have her back."

"He would let one of the boats swing under here," said Coffin, excitedly working out the secret of Mason's game. "They'd hold her close in, the mast not quite in line with the port. Then a couple of handy lads would crawl up the stick, get their fingers on the ledge here — and in they'd be in two winks. Then for gags and blankets and ropes, and a trifle of hoisting and lowering away. Then the bully would drift out and

join the other, as innocent-looking as you please, and off they'd go for the mouth of the harbor. And there we were, shouting and bawling on the deck, and thinking what almighty heroes we were. How that hard-eyed old dog must have laughed at us? But now we will give him another tune to twist his mouth to."

What Governor Mason could have expected to gain by this high-handed deed is more than I can say. Everything was against his having any control of Elizabeth's future — as he must have known.

No more than a cap-full of wind was blowing — a light, fair-weather draft off the land that scarcely touched the surface of the snug harbor. The "Jaguar's" anchor was walked up and a huddle of boats took her in tow, dragging her at a snail's pace toward the open bay. On learning what had happened, several boats from the "Good Fortune" joined in the towing. As she crawled forward, with her great sails shaking out, one by one, the sailors and colonists aboard the other ship cheered like mad. Her upper

sails filled. At last she was clear of the little headland. She headed straight out until the wind found her great mainsails. Then she set her high prow on the course of the kidnappers.

Percy paced the high forecastle, in a fever of anxiety. He knew that he had no reason to fear for Elizabeth's safety, for the governor of Guy's was, according to his own distorted view, acting for her good. But all manner of terrible accidents suggested themselves to him, torturing his mind and wringing his heart. How had she survived the shock of the unexpected attack? She had struggled, of course — and perhaps the rough fellows had hurt her in overpowering her. Had they struck her, to silence her? His blood boiled and his breath choked him at the thought. Had the gag hurt her? They rolled her in a blanket, to hide her from any prying eyes that might look over the ship's side as the bully drifted away. Perhaps! — God knew! — perhaps they had smothered her! He clenched his hands until his nails furrowed the skin. Or had they let her fall

in lowering her from the port? Lord! Lord!

He paced the forecastle, in a fever of anxiety that consumed common sense and threatened reason. It was all his fault. He should not have left the cabin for so long. Oh, Heavens! was he to be punished now for his sins?

When he had first realized that Mason was responsible for her disappearance he had felt distinctly relieved; but now, with the passing of each slow minute, his madness of apprehension grew. Terrible pictures flashed into his mind—pictures of that precious form convulsed in frantic struggling for a breath of air—pictures of it falling, bound and helpless, from that accursed port across the thwarts of that thrice-damned boat.

Coffin sought him out and read the trouble at a glance. He was shocked by the pallor and tense lines of his friend's face.

“Do not act like a fool!” he exclaimed. “You look like a maniac. Where are your wits? You know, as well as I do, that there

is nothing to worry about — beyond a little brush with Mason.”

Percy did not pause in his senseless, hysterical pacing of the narrow deck. But he shot a pitiful glance at the other. “A thousand things might have happened,” he said, marching and turning and marching again. “How do you know that she is safe? Mason would not hurt her intentionally — but accidents! What of accidents? Only the Almighty can deal with accidents.”

Coffin was seriously worried by his friend’s look and manner.

“Do you go on like this whenever you feel anxious?” he asked. “I thought you were possessed of courage — and fortitude. If this is the effect of love, then all I can say is it is making a shameless coward of you.”

Percy paid no attention to the words. “I should not have left the cabin,” he murmured. “What does she think of me? Does she think I have deserted her?”

Coffin was determined to recall him to something approaching every-day sense even

if he had to prick his temper to accomplish it.

“ She would hope you had if she could see you now,” he said, unpleasantly. “ If you do not show a little manliness I’ll warn her that she is trusting her life to a weakling — to a man who cannot bear up against worry and anxiety. Do you often get in this state? ”

Percy shook his head. “ This is not anxiety,” he said. “ It is fear. It is torture. I was never afraid before.”

Coffin changed his tactics. “ There is no doubt,” he said, “ but that Mason will keep ahead of us, on this breeze. He may get into his harbor an hour before us. Then he’ll hand Elizabeth over to the care of Mistress Mason and load his two rusty cannon for our reception.”

“ He will surely not be fool enough to refuse to give her up,” returned Percy. “ Why, we could blow his little plantation to flinders in an hour.”

“ Of course we could; but we don’t want to do that,” replied Coffin. “ It would save

trouble — and bloodshed, perhaps — if we could overhaul them. With a little more wind it could be done — before sunset.”

“ You are right. Why don’t you shake out everything and wet it down. Get what breeze there is to stick to the sails.”

Coffin went down to the main deck and spoke to the master. Orders were given and briskly answered. Every stitch of canvas was spread to the light breeze. Men went aloft with buckets of water and splashed everything within reach. Coffin returned to the high forecastle. Percy was no longer pacing the deck, but stood steady with a telescope to his eye.

“ I see them,” he said. “ They are close inshore. But there is no landing for them within ten miles. We will overhaul them.”

CHAPTER XXIV

SOUTHWARD HO!

Now there was more weight in the wind; and the "Jaguar," standing well out from the shore, felt every ounce of it. With the quarry in sight and the sails at work, Percy was himself again. With his mind and trained sea-senses busy, the nightmare faded from his heart. By day as well as by night, dreams come when the brain nods; and in his sleep and his dreams every man is a hundred times a greater coward than when he is wide awake. His inner spirit of fear, left unguarded by his nodding senses, lies open and throbbing to every imagining of danger. He awakes, feels the stir of everyday life about him, hears again the brave and simple sounds that he knows, and the sanity of familiar things recalls his courage. And so it was with John Percy. His brain was awake and sanely at work again; he

saw the clear waters parted under his ship's bows; he saw the foolish, fleeing bullies in front and close to the sheer rock of the coast; he felt the increased pressure of the wind, and the nightmare lifted from his spirit. "Thank God, she is safe," he said. He was as sure of it as if she had cried it to him across the water.

It was plain to see that Mason was defeating his own ends by laying his course so close inshore. Both his small, undecked craft were blanketed by the cliffs. And there was no place for him to make a landing — no chance for him to follow the tactics of the other kidnappers. Now the "Jaguar" was almost abreast of the bullies. Mason headed out, caught the wind and swung up against it again on his old course. His speed was materially increased; but, alas! it was not as great as that of the ship.

Governor Mason occupied the leading boat, with his captives and six men. The gags, blankets and cords had been removed from Elizabeth and her companion. They seemed little the worse for the unexpected

adventure, though both had been weeping. But now they were drying their eyes and gazing seaward at the "Jaguar;" for they could see, as well as Mason but with very different sensations, that the game was almost finished.

Now Captain Mason, for all his hardihood of spirit, was seriously regretting his action. He had been guilty of many a rash deed before, in the course of his long and pig-headed career; but now he wondered if he had ever before dared so rashly for so small a possible reward. Even if he were to succeed in keeping the girl what good would come of it? Sir Stephen Morris's gratitude, perhaps, and a complimentary letter from the august heads of the Company. He was getting past the stage of caring for compliments; and he was partial to the kind of reward that one can feel the weight of in one's pocket. On the other hand, what had he to expect? This Percy was one of Sir Walter Raleigh's masterless captains. That was all he knew of him — and quite enough, too. And the men with him, gentle and sim-

ple, were a hard-bit crew. In his rage and disregard for all law and order, might not this Percy sink the bullies and hang the well-meaning executor of Thomas Duwaney's will? A pretty return for trying to do one's duty, truly! And then, like the cruel, mad pirate that he was, what more likely than that he should sail into the harbor of Guy's and destroy the plantation? What would be more unnaturally natural? reflected Governor Mason, judging the captain's temper by his own.

"I must face the beast," decided the governor, who lacked neither courage nor a sense of duty. "The game is up, and I must face and try to appease him. It is my duty to do it. I owe it to my family and my colony. He is sure to catch me, anyway."

He shouted back to the men in the other boat, telling them to hold to their present course, no matter what happened to him, and stating briefly that he was going out to return the women. Then he swung out, before the wind, and ran straight for the "Jaguar."

The "Jaguar" went about and lay-to at the bully's approach. Elizabeth and her companion were hoisted up by eager and apprehensive hands and received aboard the ship by willing arms. To the vast relief and amazement of Mason and his crew, no further attention was paid to them or their craft. They were not even invited aboard to explain themselves. They were not so much as addressed by any one of the ship's company, though a boy leaned over the rail, after the women had been safely received aboard, and put his thumb to his nose and fluttered the fingers of the same hand in Governor Mason's direction.

The ship gathered way on her southward course, tall and grand. The bully drifted away from her high side, unheeded and humbled. A sigh of relief and wonder escaped Captain Mason's thin lips.

"Yes, sir — it do beat hell," remarked one of the crew.

The commanders of some sixty vessels of various sizes, shapes and nationalities, held

their breath when the "Jaguar" appeared in the Narrows. Many a culverin and falconet and wide-mouthed cannon was hastily loaded, ashore and afloat—for the times were uncertain times and St. John's was an uncertain harbor. But the tall stranger's ports were closed, sail was swiftly dwindling above her shapely hull, and already her boats were out and hurrying under her bows to tow her up the harbor.

She was soon recognized as the "Jaguar." Now it happened that, since the return of certain half-starved fishermen to the port, only a day or two before, the feelings of many burly fellows aboard these crowded craft had changed toward John Percy and the "Jaguar." As a pirate-exterminator, Percy had once stood high in their favor; but now, since he had thrust in his hand between some of their honest friends and several thousands of golden coins, they were in two minds about him and his ship. These puzzled souls, however, formed but a small proportion of the frequenters of that crowded and unruly port. Rough voices

were raised in friendly greeting, and several pistols and muskets were discharged in the air. By the time the "Jaguar" had arrived at her berth and let go her anchor, a dozen boats were alongside. A few gentlemen-adventurers and nine shipmasters boarded her and were welcomed cordially by John Percy, and Down and de Verney. Coffin and MacAllister were quickly made known to the visitors, the way was led to the after-cabin and refreshments were produced from locker and pantry. The recent adventures of the "Jaguar" were told, as well as the misfortunes of Bristol's Hope, the death of Duwaney and the frustration of Captain Mason's plans. Every one talked; and presently the visitors began slapping the gentlemen of the "Jaguar" on their backs and shaking their hands. They contemplated Harold Coffin with open astonishment and admiration.

"Tar me!" remarked one well-meaning skipper, "but, by the looks o' the young gentleman, I'd not trust 'im to carve a plum-duff."

“ Looks bain’t everythin’,” replied another, politely.

St. John’s was a stronghold of the West Country fishing interests, and so was dead against the colonization companies. The “ Jaguar’s ” visitors, therefore, did not pretend to mourn Duwaney’s death, and they loudly applauded the story of Mason’s several misfortunes and set-backs. For the brush with the kidnapping fishermen Percy and his companions were already forgiven by every one of the twelve; for these rough fellows could see, well enough, when others had done the right thing, though they could not always be depended upon to do the right thing themselves.

At last the great affair of Elizabeth and John Percy was made known to them. Duwaney’s daughter! A beautiful young lady who crossed the ocean in place of her brother — and in his clothes! And she had let her fortune go, and defied Governor Mason, because she loved Captain Percy! Ho! Ho! Good luck to her! That was the kind of woman for an honest and valorous man. ’Twas a

pity every sailor could not find such a true-blue lass as that. They filled their mugs and glasses again and drank Elizabeth's health with much shouting and befisting the table. Then they demanded an opportunity of seeing and paying their respects to her, for never had they heard of anything, ever before in their picturesque lives, that so inflamed their simple and romantic hearts.

Elizabeth and her devoted companion now occupied the round-house. The woman was the daughter of a widower, and having lost her father in the battle with the fishermen she had been perfectly willing to cast in her lot with that of the young lady.

Percy left the cabin, went forward to the round-house and explained matters to Elizabeth.

The door of the cabin opened. All sprang to their feet, staring. Poor devils, it was a long time since they had seen a beautiful woman. Elizabeth advanced a step and stood gazing at them very tenderly, wonderingly and gravely. In her fine, steady eyes

they could see the shadows and cross-lights of her grief and joy. "Thank you, gentlemen," she said. Then she curtsied low, with inimitable grace, turned swiftly and vanished from the cabin. Percy entered, almost on the instant, and closed the door behind him. He was met by the shout of applause that the girl's brief appearance had inspired.

"Bring her back," they cried. "Oh, the angel! 'Twas like a glint o' Heaven to see such in this place o' fish an' fogs an' brawlin'. Maybe she'll come back an' say another few words to us."

Percy excused her to them, telling them of her grief at the loss of her father and how it was intensified by the wrongful way in which he had treated her in his will, plotting to marry her to an old man against her wishes. They immediately became quiet, and expressed their sympathy for her in odd but sincere terms.

Now Percy made inquiries as to where and how a parson could be found and learned that there were two ashore, one a desperate

fellow who had served a term of imprisonment in England for attempting to murder his groom, and had escaped hanging only through the influence of his family at court, and the other a poor young scholar from Oxford who had fled from his country and his spiritual charge, and taken to drink and dice, because of some single point in the ritual of the Church which he could not bring himself to entirely agree with. It was decided by all that Master Bent, the cleric who tried to drown the consciousness of his doubt under floods of rum, was the better suited of the two for the performance of the service of holy matrimony.

“For he bain’t a bad lad at heart,” explained one of the shipmasters. “He’d be a canon now, like as not, or maybe a dean, if it wasn’t for somethin’ about a apostolic procession that he couldn’t quite swallow. He has told me all about it, many’s the time, over a bowl o’ punch — but my head bain’t much on such p’int’s.”

So it was decided that Master Bent should be notified and sobered, and that the mar-

riage should take place aboard the "Jaguar" early on the morrow.

John Percy had a good deal of business to attend to in a short time. It was not his intention to make the southward trip in the "Jaguar," because of the risk to Elizabeth in so doing. The "Jaguar" was a bird of storm, a mark on the high seas, a signal for the ships of the king, all pirates and heavy-laden Spaniards to be up and doing. So, assisted by many shipmasters, he examined fully a dozen vessels that were willing to accept a two months charter, and at last selected a stout little brig of about one hundred and seventy tons sea register for the momentous voyage to his retreat among the tropic islands. The name of the brig was the "Lucky Brother" — and the shipmasters all agreed that it was a very seemly and appropriate name, for if Captain Percy possessed a brother (the captain admitted this with a nod), then, considering the charms of the young lady, he (the captain) was his brother's lucky brother. One gentleman, in ear-rings and sea-boots, refused to see the

argument at first; but they made it clear to him in time, in a reeking tavern by the harbor-side.

A score of men were put to work immediately on the "Lucky Brother," and in the course of a few hours her cabin was enlarged, her paint touched up, and inboard she was scrubbed and scraped from end to end. Her crew was reinforced by five lads from the "Jaguar," who would stay with their old commander until such time as the two vessels should have to part company.

The wedding took place at noon, aboard the "Jaguar." A sober but somewhat low-spirited young cleric officiated. Master Coffin, arrayed in a suit of plum-colored velvet, gave the bride away. The groom was supported by Masters Down, de Verney and MacAllister and *backed* (which is said without hyperbole) by every adventurer, merchant and shipmaster in the port. The "Lucky Brother" lay at her new berth close alongside, bedecked with bunting.

An hour later, amid a blowing of horns

and firing of guns, the two vessels were towed out of the harbor, between the frowning walls of the Narrows, by swarms of eager skiffs manned by shouting fellows. The white sails blossomed on their tall spars and side by side, but with safe sea-room between, they trimmed their wings to a piping breeze, bound southward ho!

For weeks they will sail and sail, the “Jaguar” and the “Lucky Brother” never losing sight of one another across those vasty acres. At last, among the spicy islands, they will part, the “Jaguar” bound on her brave but lawless quest, the “Lucky Brother” to let go her anchor in a crystal roadstead, palm-fringed, peace-enfolded, far and far and hull-down from the world of kings and battle and revenge.

THE END.

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